This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ

PS
3521
I38
1918
v.1

JOYCE KILMER

POEMS, ESSAYS
AND LETTERS
IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME ONE: MEMOIR AND POEMS

© *Underwood and Underwood*

JOYCE KILMER, AGE 30
LAST CIVILIAN PORTRAIT

JOYCE KILMER

EDITED WITH A MEMOIR
BY ROBERT CORTES HOLLIDAY

VOLUME ONE
MEMOIR AND POEMS

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

Copyright, 1914, 1917, 1918
By George H. Doran Company

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO THE MEMORY OF

JOYCE KILMER

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Smart Set, Munsey's Magazine and *Puck*—a curiously assorted company, highly expressive of the catholicity of the mind these pages reflect.

The article on Hilaire Belloc, originally one of Kilmer's lectures, was first printed in the American edition of Belloc's "Verses." The early poems have been chosen from Kilmer's first book, "A Summer of Love," now out of print, rights to which are held by Mrs. Aline Kilmer. Poems not otherwise credited have been reprinted from the volumes already published by George H. Doran Company.

R. C. H.

New York, 1918.

CONTENTS VOLUME ONE

PAGE

MEMOIR 17

POEMS FROM FRANCE

ROUGE BOUQUET 105
THE PEACEMAKER 108
PRAYER OF A SOLDIER IN FRANCE 109
WHEN THE SIXTY-NINTH COMES BACK 110
MIRAGE DU CANTONMENT 113

POEMS AT HOME

WARTIME CHRISTMAS 117
MAIN STREET 118
ROOFS 120
THE SNOWMAN IN THE YARD 122
A BLUE VALENTINE 124
HOUSES 127
IN MEMORY 128
APOLOGY 131
THE PROUD POET 133
LIONEL JOHNSON 137
FATHER GERARD HOPKINS, S.J. 138
GATES AND DOORS 139
THE ROBE OF CHRIST 142
THE SINGING GIRL 145
THE ANNUNCIATION 146
ROSES 147
THE VISITATION 149
MULTIPLICATION 150
THANKSGIVING 152
THE THORN 153

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Big Top	154
Mid-ocean in War-time	157
Queen Elizabeth Speaks	158
In Memory of Rupert Brooke	159
The New School	160
Easter Week	163
The Cathedral of Rheims	165
Kings	169
The White Ships and the Red	170
The Twelve-Forty-Five	174
Pennies	178
Trees	180
Stars	181
Old Poets	183
Delicatessen	185
Servant Girl and Grocer's Boy	190
Wealth	192
Martin	193
The Apartment House	194
As Winds That Blow Against a Star	196
St. Laurence	197
To a Young Poet Who Killed Himself	198
Memorial Day	200
The Rosary	201
Vision	202
To Certain Poets	203
Love's Lantern	205
St. Alexis	206
Folly	208
Madness	210
Poets	211
Citizen of the World	212

CONTENTS

PAGE

To a Blackbird and His Mate Who Died in the Spring 213
The Fourth Shepherd 215
Easter 218
Mount Houvenkopf 219
The House with Nobody in It 220
Dave Lilly 223
Alarm Clocks 226
Waverley 227

EARLY POEMS

In a Book-shop 231
Slender Your Hands 232
Sleep Song 233
White Bird of Love 234
Transfiguration 236
Ballade of My Lady's Beauty 237
For a Birthday 239
Wayfarers 242
Princess Ballade 244
Lullaby for a Baby Fairy 246
A Dead Poet 248
The Mad Fiddler 249
The Grass in Madison Square 251
Said the Rose 252
Metamorphosis 254
For a Child 255
The Clouded Sun (To A. S.) 256
The Poet's Epitaph 259
Beauty's Hair 260
The Way of Love 262
Chevely Crossing 267
The Other Lover 270

ILLUSTRATIONS

JOYCE KILMER, AGE 30 ..... *Frontispiece*

PAGE

FAC-SIMILE OF AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPT OF "THE PEACEMAKER" 108

JOYCE KILMER, AGE 21 240

MEMOIR

MEMOIR

IT IS the felicity of these pages that they cannot be dull. It is their merit, peculiar in such a memoir, that they cannot be sad. It is their novelty that they can be restricted in appeal only by the varieties of the human species. It is their good fortune that they can be extraordinarily frank. It is their virtue that they cannot fail to do unmeasurable good. And it is their luck to abide many days.

With their subject how could it be otherwise? They make not a wreath, but a chronicle, and in their assembled facts tell a bright chapter in the history of our time. If there is one word which more than any other should be linked with the name of this gallant figure now claimed (and rightly) by so many elements of the nation, that word certainly is "American." A character and a career so racy, typical of all that everybody likes to believe that at our best we are, can hardly be matched, I think, outside of stories.

I

Joyce Kilmer was reported in the papers as having said, just before he sailed for France, that he was "half Irish," and that was why he belonged with

the boys of the Sixty-ninth. His birth was not exactly eloquent of this fact. Though, indeed, he was, as will appear, a much more ardent Irishman than many an Irishman born—that is, in the sense of keenly savouring those things which are fine in the Irish character, and with characteristic gusto feeling within himself an affinity with them. Later, in a letter from France to his wife, he was more explicit on this point:

As to the matter of my own blood (you mentioned this in a previous letter) I did indeed tell a good friend of mine who edits the book-review page of a Chicago paper that I was "half Irish." But I have never been a mathematician. The point I wished to make was that a large percentage—which I have a perfect right to call half—of my ancestry was Irish. For proof of this, you have only to refer to the volumes containing the histories of my mother's and my father's families. Of course I am American, but one cannot be pure American in blood unless one is an Indian. And I have the good fortune to be able to claim, largely because of the wise matrimonial selections of my progenitors on both sides, Irish blood. And don't let anyone publish a statement contrary to this.

He also, in a letter from France, quoted with much relish the remark of Father Francis P. Duffy

that he was "half German and half human." English and Scotch strains made up another half or three quarters. The English goes straight back to one Thomas Kilburne, church warden at Wood-dilton, near Newmarket, in Cambridgeshire, who came to Connecticut in 1638. The "e" was lost apparently in Massachusetts, and the word became, as in his mother's maiden name, Kilburn.

Soldier blood, too, flowed in his veins—though it is likely that this fact for the first time occurred to him, if at all, when his nature rose white-hot to arms. He was, so to say, a Colonial Dame on both sides, as members of both his father's and his mother's family fought in the American Revolution; and members of his father's family in the French and Indian wars.

Alfred Joyce Kilmer (as he was christened) was born at New Brunswick, New Jersey, December 6, 1886, son of Annie Kilburn and Frederick Kilmer. Though he seems always to have been, in familiar address and allusion, called Joyce, the Alfred did not disappear from his address and signature until he began, as more or less of a professional writer, to publish his work, when it went the way of the Newton in Mr. Tarkington's name, and the Enoch in Mr. Bennett's. Then "Joyce Kilmer" acquired a

fine humorous disdain for what he regarded as the florid note in literary signatures of three words (or, worse still to his mind, the A. Joyce kind of thing); and he enjoyed handing down, with much relish of the final and judicial character of his utterance, the opinion that the proper sort of a trademark, so to say, for success in letters was something short, pointed, easy to say and to remember, such as Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, O. Henry, Joseph Conrad, and so on through illustrations carried, at length, to intentionally infuriating numbers.

As a small boy, Kilmer is described by those who knew him then as the "funniest" small boy they ever saw, by which is meant, apparently, that he was an odd spectacle. And this, of course, is so altogether in line with literary tradition that it would have been odd if he had not been an oddity in the way of a spectacle. He wore queer clothes, it seems, ordinary stockings with bicycle breeches, and that sort of thing. He didn't altogether fit in somehow, couldn't find himself, was somewhat of an outsider among the juvenile clans; he was required to fight other boys a good deal; he evidenced a pronounced inability to comprehend anything at all of arithmetic; and somewhere between eight and twelve (so the report goes) he contracted a violent passion for

a lady, of about thirty-five, who was his teacher at school; a passion which endured for a considerable time, and became a hilarious legend among the youth about him of jocose humour.

It is told that at "Prep" school, when this goal seemed rather unlikely of his attainment, he made up his mind to stand at the head of his class; and with something like the later Kilmerian exercise of will he accomplished his purpose.

Kilmer was graduated from Rutgers College in 1904, and received his A. B. from Columbia in 1906. His University life seems to have been, in outward effect, fairly normal. There is no ready evidence that he "shone" particularly, and none that he failed to "shine." He was not deported by the authorities, and he was not unanimously hailed the idol of his classmates. He became a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity: and he was, of course, active in college journalism. Then as always he appears to have been zestful in living well, to have counted sufficient to the day the excellence thereof, and to have been too warm with life to be calculating in expenditures. He retained in the years that followed—and it seems to have been the college memory he retained most distinctly—a humorous recollection of his consuming his allowance on an abundance of rich

viands during the first few days of each month, and being reduced to the necessity of living precariously on a meagre ration of crackers and sandwiches thereafter—until next income day.

Characteristic of the vehement manner in which he went after life, as a Sophomore Kilmer became engaged to Miss Aline Murray, of New Jersey, a step-daughter of Henry Mills Alden, editor of *Harper's Magazine*. Upon leaving Columbia he took up the business of making a living in the way of an elder American intellectual tradition, by teaching school in a (more or less) rural community. He returned to New Jersey and began his career as instructor of Latin at Morristown High School. So slight a lad he was, even several years after this time, that it is difficult to picture him in the disciplinary adventures of the classic figure of this calling. His problems at Morristown doubtless were dissimilar to those of his early, Hoosier, prototype. He married and became a householder. His son, Kenton, was born. In religion he had been bred an Episcopalian, and during this period in New Jersey (it is told) he acted as a lay reader in this church.

He soon concluded, apparently, that pedagogy was, so to say, no life for a boy. At the conclusion of a year's teaching he tore up the roots he had

planted, and, together with the young lady he had married, and the son born to them, and with a few youthful poems in his pocket, he advanced upon the metropolis, even in the classic way, on the ancient quest of conscious talent.

The rapidity and brilliance of Joyce Kilmer's success has altogether obscured his very democratic beginnings. As his initial occupation in New York, he obtained, by a lucky chance, employment as editor of a journal for horsemen, though of horses he had no particular knowledge—to be exact, no such knowledge whatever. Here finding little to do, and discovering one day in a desk drawer a bulky manuscript, he decided—as he was editor—to edit it. This, apparently, he did with youthful energy. The little job he mentioned with some satisfaction to his employer, a fine portly sportsman with a crimson face and an irascible temper. The young editor explained that the manuscript evidently had been written by a man familiar with horses, but one apparently innocent of the art of literary composition. "Young man," bellowed his employer, "I would have you understand I have been through the best veterinary college in the world, and I have been a veterinary myself for over forty years." His wife, he added, was his amanu-

ensis, and he guessed she knew something about writing. The editorship came to an abrupt termination.

Then followed a brief sojourn, at a salary of (I think) eight dollars a week, as retail salesman in the book store of Charles Scribner's Sons, a dignity which the young littérateur wore with humorous dignity for exactly two weeks. A distinct mental impression of him of this time presents him as decidedly like an Eton boy in general effect, and it seems that a large white collar and a small-size high hat should have gone with him to make the picture quite right. One who met him then felt at once a gracious, slightly courtly, young presence. He gave forth an aroma of excellent, gentlemanly manners. He frequently pronounced, as an indication that he had not heard you clearly, the word "Pardon?"—with a slight forward inclination of his head, which, altogether, was adorable. His smile, never far away, when it came was winning, charming. It broke like spring sunshine, it was so fresh and warm and clear. And there was noticeable then in his eyes a light, a quiet glow which marked him as a spirit not to be forgotten. So tenderly boyish was he in effect that his confreres among the book clerks accepted with difficulty the story that he was married.

When it was told that he had a son they gasped their incredulity. And when one day this extraordinary elfin sprite remarked that at the time of his honeymoon he had had a beard they felt (I remember) that the world was without power to astonish them further.

As a retail salesman, however, this exceedingly interesting young man did not make a high mark. One's general impression of him "on the floor" is a picture of a happy student, standing, entranced, frequently with his back to the door (which theoretically he should have been watching for incoming customers), day after day engrossed in perusing a rare edition of "Madame Bovary." One sensational feat of business he did as a clerk perform. Misreading, in his newness to these hieroglyphics, the cypher in which in stores the prices of books are marked on the fly leaves of the volumes, he sold to a lady a hundred-and-fifty-dollar book for a dollar and a half. This transaction being what is termed a "charge sale," not a "cash sale," and amid some excitement the matter being immediately rectified, disaster for the amateur salesman was averted.

At Scribner's a close friendship was, almost at once, formed between the youthful poet and another then unpublished writer acting at that time in the

same capacity of clerk—a friendship which was never diminished by the numerous shiftings of Kilmer's fields of activity, the multitudinous, diverse and ardent interests which he acquired in an ever-mounting measure, and the steady addition of numberless friends of all classes who eagerly yielded him their devotion. It was rather a friendship which was continually cemented by increasing and closer bonds. It was a part of Kilmer's spirit to make his first friend in his literary life a sharer as far as was possible in each new success of his own. One among many, innumerable, instances of this was his contriving, by his influence with the editor (at that time another intimate, Louis H. Wetmore), to work his friend into a position somewhat rivaling his own at the period (1912-1913) when he was the bright and shining star reviewer for the *New York Times Review of Books*. The regular Tuesday lunching together of these two friends when their offices were widely separated became, at least in their own fancy, an American literary institution. The two were united in all the symbols of affection between men. And at seasons of rejoicing and adversity the Kilmer house was to his friend as his own. It is to this one who among all of Joyce Kilmer's friends owes him the greatest debt of friendship has come

the supreme trust of writing, within the power of his many and conscious limitations, this Memoir, and editing these volumes.

Dropping the very small bird which he held in his hand in the way of a secure salary, the spectacular bookseller, somewhat to twist the figure, plunged again into uncharted seas, and became a lexicographer, as an editorial assistant in the work of preparing a new edition of the Standard Dictionary. He blithely began his Johnsonian labours by defining ordinary words assigned to him, at a pay of five cents for each word defined. This is a very different thing indeed from receiving a rate of five cents a word for writing. It is a task at which you can obtain an average of perhaps ten or twelve dollars a week, though some weeks "stickers" will hold you back. It soon became apparent, evidently, that it was advisable to put this very capable pieceworker on a salary; and he was rapidly promoted, with corresponding increases in remuneration (reaching an amount of something like four times his initial earnings), to more advanced phases of the work: research into dates of birth (involving correspondence with living celebrities); research into the inception of inventions (as, for example, the introduction of the barrier into horse racing); together with the

defining of words of contemporary origin, in, for instance, the nomenclature of aviation. In this last mentioned department, it was his office to call upon authorities, such as the Wright brothers, and upon presentation of his credentials to receive precise information. He interviewed famous tobacco importers, and coffee merchants; compiled in the New York Public Library material about fans; unearthed for use as an illustration a picture of a strange bird; or was assigned to collect for this purpose designs of ancient mouldings.

If lexicography was Kilmer's venerable occupation, by political faith he was at the time, this very young, young man, a socialist. He subscribed for and frequently contributed to the *Call* newspaper. And the height of his effervescence was in addressing meetings of the proletariat. He was, it must be said, a burning "young radical." He frequented, to some extent, a club of that name. And with a joyous consciousness of being in the character of his surroundings he ate meals at the Rand School of Social Science. He rapidly acquired a wonderful string of queer acquaintances, in whose idiosyncrasies he took immense delight. Some, not of the persuasion, fancied that as an adherent of the socialist party he was merely enam-

oured of an intellectual idea. At any rate, whenever in conversation he spoke of socialism, as he frequently did, his graceful, amiable young features assumed a very firm and earnest aspect. Exactly the point of transition, if there was any decided point, I cannot recall, but from the proletariat he passed to the literati. A "man of letters" became a great word with him. And he looked rather proudly about as he said it, as a Scot might speak of the doughty deeds of the Scotch. He was wont to refer, too, to the "intellectual aristocracy." His luncheon engagements were now mostly with this order of humanity, and his anecdotes featured such figures as Richard Le Gallienne and Bliss Carman —men whose personalities delighted his heart beyond measure.

How absurdly juvenile he looked. But you would have noted, as you observed him, that he had a very fine head, something like that of Arthur Symons (without the moustache), I thought; or, according to Mr. Le Gallienne's sympathetic picture in *The Bookman:* "Though the resemblance was perhaps only a spiritual expression, his then thin, austere young face, with those strangely strong and gentle eyes (eyes that seemed to have an independent, dominating existence), reminded me of Lionel

Johnson, for whom he had already a great admiration, and whose religion he was afterwards to embrace." Or, again, he seemed as if he might be a comely youth out of ancient Greece. I think that what I mean is that he was so unlike all other young men anyone had ever seen walking about, so much brighter and purer, or some indescribable thing, that he did not seem altogether real. A feeling which I think was shared by many, and which I have never quite been able to make articulate, Mr. Le Gallienne has most happily expressed with his own easy charm; that is the "hint of destiny" in this "very concentrated, intense young presence—masculine intense, not feminine:"

We have all met young people who give us that —beautiful, brilliant, lovely natured, so superabundant in all their qualities (and particularly perhaps in some quality of emanating light)—as to make them suggest the supernatural, and touched, too, with the finger of a moonlight that has written "fated" upon their brows. Probably our feeling is nothing more mysterious than our realisation that temperaments so vital and intense must inevitably tempt richer and swifter fates than those less wild winged.

Above all, this young gentleman was the portrait of a poet, even (in those days) of the type of liter-

ary sophistication which is (or was) called decadent! There was about him a perceptible aroma of literary self-consciousness. He had begun to contribute to magazines and newspapers the verses which he soon gathered into a first volume, "A Summer of Love" (an "author's book," as the trade term has it), verses patently derivative in character (as whose early verses are not?), showing the influences of various masters.

He had already become a bit of a celebrity, arriving at twenty-five in *Who's Who.* In conversation he spoke with striking fluency and precision, and a rather amusing effect of authority; all of which, together with a ready command, rather incongruous for his years, of very apt words little employed in speech, gave a general impression, I fancy, of something of an infant prodigy. He wrote in a letter of this time of the poems of Coventry Patmore:

I have come to regard them with intense admiration. Have you read them? Patmore seems to me to be a greater poet than Francis Thompson. (Kilmer, had by the way, just given a lecture at Columbia University on Francis Thompson.) He has not the rich vocabulary, the decorative erudition, the Shelleyan enthusiasm, which distinguish the "Sister Songs" and the "Hound of Heaven," but

he has a classical simplicity, a restraint and sincerity which make his poems satisfying. Some of his shorter poems, such as "Alexander and Lycon" and "The Toys," approach Landor in their Greek economy. Of course, the "Angel in the House," and many other of his poems, are marred by Tennysonian influences. But the "Unknown Eros" is a work of stupendous beauty. It is certainly supreme among modern religious poems. That part of it devoted to Eros and Psyche is remarkably daring and remarkably fine. Psyche symbolizes the soul, and Eros the love of God. Their amour is described with realistic minuteness, even with humorous flippancy, and yet the whole poem is alive with religious feeling.

The finding of Patmore, by the way, was what might be called a finger-post in Kilmer's life. The fortunate introduction was performed by, it is my impression, Kilmer's friend Thomas Walsh.

If in cold print to-day there is a slightly preposterous didactic quality in these remarks of this youthful character, it should be instantly noted as a tribute to the charm that was his that in the presence of so much handsomeness and grace, combined with so much flexibility of mind and agile humour, even this was an engaging thing.

There was to Kilmer nothing whatever dry-as-

dust about the erudite business of lexicography; instead his impressionable nature found among his co-workers a rich, a colourful, an exciting school of humanity. He glowed continually with affectionate amusement at the motley band of literary adventurers, intellectual soldiers of fortune, who apparently were his colleagues. One, the most motley perhaps of all (the long cherished dream of whose ancient bachelor life it was one day to write a popular song), touched, for the first time, I think, the deepest spring of his song—his profound and wide-ranging humanity.

Some people ask: "What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?"
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance,
And wore an overcoat of glory.

II

And then, lo! the aesthete became a churchman. After a couple of years or so of lexicographic employment, work on the dictionary was completed, and Kilmer entered what, with immense gusto, he described as "religious journalism." He became literary editor of *The Churchman.*

He had completed a very thorough course in uptown New York apartment house life (living, I

think, in rapid succession in some half dozen specimens of "the great stone box cruelly displayed severe against the pleasant arc of sky"); and now removing to the suburban village of Mahwah, New Jersey, in the Ramapo foothills, he entered upon his career as one of the world's most accomplished commuters. He used to say, with a spacious gesture of the arm and a haughty inflation of the chest, that it was no life at all, no life at all, for a man not to swing around an orbit of at least sixty miles a day between his office and his home. His home, even so!

I never have seen a vagabond who really liked to roam
All up and down the streets of the world and not to have a home.

What more exhilarating experience than the owning of a home! And one paid one's installments on the building loan with the fine pride of a man exercising a noble prerogative. Yes, he often walked to Suffern along the Erie track, and meditated on "what a house should do, a house that has sheltered life,"

That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling feet.

As became a churchman, he began to hold forth to his companion on the train to and from the city on the fascinations of the Anglican poets. Either his enthusiasm for the subject resulted in a series of articles on the theme, or an assignment for such a series of articles resulted in his enthusiasm, I don't know which. The significant point is that it was just as like to have been either way about. "Passon Hawker"—Robert Stephen Hawker—Vicar of Morwenstow, a coast life-guard in a cassock—who can recite off hand the deeds of his piety and his valour? Well, on the Erie smoker he became one of the most romantic figures of story. Robert Herrick, in a manner of speaking, went home many a night on the Twelve-Forty-Five (Robert Herrick, that is, with his "Unbaptized Rhimes" left out), and Bishop Coxe returned on the Seven-Fifty-Six in the morning.

Kilmer had already done a few book reviews for *The Nation* and for the *New York Times;* but at *The Churchman* he acquired such a proficiency at this exercise that he was able, jocularly, to regard Arnold Bennett, as a literary journalist, as a "mere amateur." The real reward of "religious journalism," however, it soon developed, was the opportunity of writing a feature which the secular might

call an editorial, but the proper name of which this editor pronounced, in the tone and with the manner of one who was consciously engaged in something grand, gloomy and peculiar, as a "meditation."

The real meditations of Joyce Kilmer, however, were not "meditations" so called, and partook in no wise of the nature of editorials. He had been, in the main, a graceful troubadour who thrummed pleasant things to his lady-love, and had a bright eye to his singing robes. He had thought it rather fine, too, that refrain in imitation of Richepin:

> May booze be plenty, bulls be few,
> The poet is the beggars' king.

He had even been much taken, artistically, with the thought of absinthe:

> O little green god in your crystal shrine,
> Your heavenly dream-shower shed!

It was when his business took him near to God, when his exploring spirit, upon a peak in Darien, beheld that:

> Poems are made by fools like me,
> But only God can make a tree,

that he began to be a poet. "Trees," which more than all the rest he had written put together made

his reputation, appeared in *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* in August, 1913.

At about this period it was that he was altogether born again. Then, doubtless in castigatory reaction against his own aesthetic and "decadent" wild oats, entered into his fibre that sovereign disdain for the intellectual flub-dub which later gave such a delightful note of "horse-sense" to all his humorous thought—the Johnsonian sting ("and don't you think you were an ass?") which found its earliest biting expression in the verses "To a Young Poet Who Killed Himself."

"I've been leading a rather active life, for several days," was with a gay salute of the hand, a frequent Kilmerian remark. In 1912 the direction of the *New York Times Review of Books* fell into the hands of a high-spirited young man, a Max-Beerbohmian character, with a decided taste for gaiety in reviews, Mr. Wetmore, who conducted that organ through what is known in New York journalistic tradition as its "meteoric period." Mr. Wetmore's wit perceived in Kilmer his happiest rocket. Not only given his head but egged on by his editor to strive for sublime heights of fantasy, this fairly unknown contributor shot in a series of reviews which for readability was, the applause now indicated, an

altogether new thing in the book pages of an American newspaper. "This is a bad book, a very bad book, indeed," so ran the style. "It is bad because it makes this reviewer feel old and fat and bald." If, together with their humorous assumption of a jovial cocksureness of manner, the literary judgments expressed were, of necessity, snap-shot judgments, there was nothing snap-shot nor assumed about a certain quality in them which in general effect was the most striking of all, namely, the reflection in a very positive way of a radiantly clean and wholesome young nature, abounding in mental and spiritual health.

As one of the general prime movers in, and for a number of years Corresponding Secretary of The Poetry Society of America, Kilmer engaged on the side in activities which for many another would have been in themselves almost a whole job. A fervent Dickensonian, he was for a long period president and (one felt) the animating principle of the American Dickens Fellowship. He accumulated offices to such an extent that I am doubtful if anyone but himself knew exactly how many employments he had altogether, or at any one moment. He conducted the Poetry department of *The Literary Digest* for something like nine years, an obligation

which he continued to fulfill even from Camp Mills, Long Island, to the time when he sailed for France. For a time he conducted a similar department in *Current Literature,* and also did a quarterly article on poetry for, I think, the *Review of Reviews.* Among his earlier essays in the lecture field was a paper on "The Drama as an Instrument of Sex Education," read before a regular meeting of the Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis held at the New York Academy of Medicine, in December, 1913. The society with the playful name, I recollect, got seriously interested in the matter of sex education as then expounded. Their views on the drama in this connection were enlarged by acquisition of the idea that though " 'The Great Love' is, in my opinion, one of the most skilfully constructed plays presented on the New York stage for many a year, I am quite serious in saying that as a factor in sex education, it is a thousand times inferior to 'Bertha the Beautiful Cloak Model.' "

As Kilmer was always decidedly what is termed a ready writer, what I should attempt to describe as a natural writer (a startling exception to the rule that easy writing makes hard reading), so he appeared to have the gift of speaking readily in public. On frequent occasions, at any rate in his early talks,

he neglected altogether to prepare any outline beforehand, and even sometimes to choose a subject. Every now and then, I have known him repeatedly to say to his companion at dinner, without, however, any trace at all of nervousness: "Now, look here: Put your mind on this. Stop all that gossip. Tell me what I'm to talk about. I have to begin" (looking at his watch) "in twenty-five minutes."

He was particularly active in the affairs of the Authors' Club, and was a member of the Vagabonds, the Columbia University Club and the Alianza Puertorriguena. In 1913 he ceased, officially, to be a churchman. For a brief period he contemplated the prospect of a professorship, lecturing on English Literature at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee. Then, to his great delight, he became a newspaper man—as he continually put it, with much relish in the part, "a hard newspaper man." He became a special writer for the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. I am sure he saw himself in fancy as one of those weather-beaten characters bred in the old-time newspaper school of booze, profanity and hard knocks, his only text-book the police-court blotter and the moulder of his youth a particularly brutal night city-editor. He maintained, with humorous arrogance against

opposing argument, the thesis that every great writer had got his "training" as a newspaper man. He delighted to point, as illustrations of this, to Dickens, to Thackeray, and to a lot more, who, in any strict sense of the word, were not "newspaper men" at all. Hard pressed, he even stood ready to make some such hilariously sweeping assertion as that George Eliot, Shakespeare, Tennyson and Robert Browning were, properly perceived, "newspaper men."

At any rate, this hard newspaper man had to begin with a comical equipment for his task: he would never learn to typewrite and he knew nothing of shorthand. Or rather, he was remarkably well equipped, as one of the outstanding traits of his character was the fearless zest with which, so to say, he took the hurdles of life, and a peculiar faculty in triumphing over such obstacles as his own limitations. He rapidly invented a curious system of abbreviations and marks to remind him of points, which served him as an interviewer as effectively as any knowledge of stenography could have done. He energetically entered upon his occupation as a feature writer with the customary themes of the "Sunday story." He interviewed, figuratively speaking, the man who had discovered the missing

link, and he got from the latest inventor of perpetual motion all the arresting details of his machine. And a lively part of the early Sunday morning ritual at his home was the advance calculating with a tape measure of the week's income from space writing.

It was later that he created his own highly successful type of literary interview. An intelligent perception of the business, a perception which is not general, perhaps is required fully to appreciate the fact that in this department of newspaper work he was an exceedingly skillful journalist. The secret of his really brilliant success in this field lay in large part in his instinct for luring the distinguished subject of his interview into provocative statements, enabling him to employ such heads as: "Is O. Henry a Pernicious Literary Influence?" "Godlessness Mars Most Contemporary Poetry," "Americans Lack Loyalty To Their Writers," "Shackled Magazine Editors Harm Literature," "Declares Our Rich Authors Make Cheap Literature" and "Says American Literature Is Going To the Dogs."

At the time of the death of James Whitcomb Riley, Kilmer hurried to the Catskills for his interview with Bliss Carman. On his way back to the

city, by way of his home at Mahwah, he dashed with his usual impetuosity in front of the moving train he was seeking to board, was knocked down and hurled or dragged a considerable distance, and taken to the Good Samaritan Hospital at Suffern, New York, with three ribs fractured and other injuries; where, wiring immediately to New York for his secretary, he dictated an interview as engaging and as full of journalistic craft as any he ever wrote. He seemed much more intent on his Sunday story, it is reported by H. Christopher Watts, who was acting as his secretary at that time, than on his predicament.

I did not see Kilmer at this time myself, but I have an idea that, when he had relieved his mind of the anxiety concerning his article, he entered into the spirit of his experience with much relish. It isn't every day that one gets hit by a train, nor everybody that has three ribs broken. Exhilarating kind of thing, when you see it that way! I remember one time when I was practically in hospital myself he went to a good deal of trouble to come to see me. He seemed to admire my predicament very much, and, beaming upon me, remarked in high good humour that it must be an entertaining thing to be so completely at the mercy of circum-

stances over which you had no control. When shall we look upon his like again!

III

I really doubt very much whether anybody ever enjoyed food more than Kilmer. The slender youth had become a decidedly stocky young man, who ate mammoth meals with prodigious satisfaction. He delighted upon sitting down to breakfast to maintain, with almost savage earnestness (such was the amusing effect), that the most fitting dish for that meal was steak. As a matter of fact, however, his habit was to miss his breakfast altogether through haste to catch his train, except for a cup of coffee and a piece of buttered toast which, when he missed the 'bus, he ate, a mouthful every dozen or so leaps, on his way down the hill (almost a mountain) to the station. Sundays, however, with the whole day at home, he apparently regarded among other things as a sort of barbecue. Looking over the morning table it was his custom to inquire with the air of a man making a fairly satisfactory beginning, what was scheduled for dinner.

Kilmer never ate any lunch, as the ordinary world understands the word—about the first hour of the afternoon he went (when his means had become

such that he could afford it) to a sort of Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner every day. How proceeding directly to his office he did any work afterward, was always considerable of a mystery to me. And lunching alone he doubtless regarded as a misanthropic perversion. His luncheons and his frequent dinners in town alone represented what many would regard as a rather arduous social life, which however arduous, however, never failed to include the weekly luncheon with his mother, Mrs. Kilburn-Kilmer. As an epilogue, so to say, to his meal it was his wont to have, speaking his order slowly so as to suck the full flavour of the idea, "a large black cigar."

One time being in the city with his family for a period after the birth of one of his children, he gave a series of Sunday morning breakfasts at a fashionable restaurant (it was a pleasant crotchet with him that he was "a fashionable young man"), entertainments which were distinguished by, first, the fact the guests so abundantly represented the world of journalism that they filled a good portion of the room, and, secondly, by the circumstance of their lingering at the board until mid-day diners began to arrive.

How a poet could *not* be a glorious eater, it was one of Kilmer's whims to say, he could not see; for

the poet was happier than other men by reason of his acuter senses, and as his eyes delighted in the beauty of the world, so should his palate thrill with pleasure in the taste of the earth's bounteous yield for the sustenance of men. The romance, too, of the things we eat he felt lustily.

Rich spices from the Orient,
And fruit that knew Italian skies.

He had another, and a decidedly quaint, notion of food. He firmly believed that hearty eating was an adequate physical compensation for loss of sleep. He was fond of declaring his faith in this fantastic idea by means of a story of some "ancient receptive child" (friend of his) who managed to bring up a family of seven (or so) children by ill-paid hack-work occupying most of the day and night—a noble success due entirely to noble meals.

* * * * * * *

This man has home and child and wife
And battle set for every day.
This man has God and love and life;
These stand, all else shall pass away.

And "this man's" days were long, long days: Kilmer's home, a place of boundless week-end hospitality and almost equally boundless domesticity

(guests being obliged to exercise much agility in clambering about toys with which the stairs were laden), was also year after year a place of almost unbelievable literary industry. The trying idiosyncrasies of the artistic temperament were about as discernible in Kilmer as kleptomania. He was, as you may say, social and domestic in his habits of writing to an amazing degree. Night after night he would radiantly walk up and down the floor singing a lullaby to one of his children whom he carried screaming in his arms while he dictated between vociferous sounds to his secretary or wife—his wife frequently driven by the drowsiness of two in the morning to take short naps with her head upon the typewriter while the literally tireless journalist filled and lighted his pipe.

This, however, was an atmosphere of cloistral seclusion compared with Kilmer's office at the *New York Times*. Here, where he regularly got through each week enough hard work to hold down three or four fairly capable young men, he maintained a sort of salon for a ludicrous variety of picturesque characters with nothing in particular to do and no place else to go, ranging from types of patrician leisure to stray dogs of the literary world visibly out of a job.

The latter class, indeed, apparently regarded him as a kind of a clearing house for employment. A singularly convincing commentary on the radiating humanity of this brilliant young man was one rather grotesque feature of his mail. In addition to a constant and copious stream of requests from persons but slightly known, or quite unknown to him, for advice as to how to succeed in letters, and for his personal imprimatur on their enclosed manuscripts, he was apparently constantly in receipt of innumerable epistolary stories of extraordinary distress, suffered (generally) by elderly characters defeated in the lists of literature. Though there was in Kilmer's robust nature a decided distaste, somewhat analogous to the innate aversion of the clean in spirit to moral obliquity, for what he termed "ineffectual people," there was too an amusing strain of paternal feeling toward most of those of all ages with whom he was in contact. And this feeling he did not neglect, whenever the occasion arose, to translate into practical effect.

He had a comical manner of terming his elders "young" So-and-So. I was six years his senior, which at the period of life at which we met represented a considerable difference in experience. And yet, throughout our association, in spiritual

force he was the oak, I the clinging vine. And I know of cases where this was quite as much so when the other man was something like fifteen years the elder. One such instance, ludicrous in its contrast between the two men, was confessed to me with deep feeling just the other day.

"So-long' or "good-bye" was seldom Kilmer's parting word. It was rather a word he continually used which will be thought of as peculiarly his as long as his memory endures, the closing word of "Rouge Bouquet." The last time I saw him at his home, then at Larchmont Manor, New York, my companion (in marriage) and I upon leaving almost missed our car, which started a block or so from the Kilmer house. As the three of us dashed after it, Kilmer stopped this car by what seemed to me something like sheer force of his willing it to stop. Then, as he dropped away from the race, there came from him high and clear out of the night (and always shall I hear it ring) his benediction: "Farewell! Children." Yes, it is even so; as the spirit is measured and the frailties of the soul are numbered, how many who knew this wondrous boy were his "children"!

The wisdom of the maxim "A busy man is never too busy to do one thing more" was indisputable in

the spectacle of Kilmer. Though this was not, so far as I recollect, a maxim he employed, he had one of his own something like it, which admirably summed up his practical philosophy. When confronted by some financial dilemma, he was fond of declaring: "The demand creates the supply. A sound economic principle." He seemed to crave serious responsibilities and insistent obligations as some men crave liquor; and he grew more rosy as these increased.

Thank God for the mighty tide of fears
  Against me always hurled!
Thank God for the bitter and ceaseless strife,
  And the sting of His chastening rod!

There was nothing incongruous to Kilmer about the incongruity expressed in a communication written in 1916 to the Reverend Edward F. Garesché, S. J.; a letter which began by saying, "I am sorry that your letter of October 11 has been so long unanswered, but this has been the busiest month of my life"; which then told of his looping the loop of the country in lecture engagements; proceeded to discuss a matter which had made a strong appeal to his heart, the founding of an Academy of Catholic Letters to be called the Marian Institute; and con-

cluded with the remark, "I will gladly take on the work of acting secretary until the members make their own selection."

IV

In 1913, Kilmer's daughter Rose, nine months of age, was stricken with infantile paralysis. It was then, upon his bringing his family to town to give his daughter the treatment of a specialist, when he came to my house to tell me of this, that I first distinctly realised that this young man was remarkable —in a manner far beyond mere talent. The idea which he kept firmly before his mind was that it had been declared there was no occasion to fear her death as a result of her affliction. During the course of his stay with me that day he said several times, "Well, there are lots of people worse off than I am." This idea, too, it was apparent, he felt he must hold before him. And then, with his amazing and unconquerable *flair* for life, he launched upon the theme that this was a "very interesting disease," and he elaborated the thought that an infirmity of the body frequently resulted in an increased vitality of the mind.

"I like to feel that I have always been a Cath-

olic," was a sentiment frequently expressed by Kilmer. It has repeatedly been declared by friends very close to him that his minute knowledge of pious customs and practices of which a life-long Catholic might easily be ignorant was a constant surprise to them, but that with respect to religion as particularised in himself he kept silent, would never discuss the steps that led to his conversion, and it was only by chance they discovered he was a daily communicant. It was late in 1913 that Kilmer astonished the little world that then comprised his family, his friends and acquaintances by entering, with his wife, the Roman Catholic Church. One afternoon not long after this occurrence he not so much invited as directed me over the telephone to meet him that night for dinner at the Columbia Club. His purpose soon became clear. This was the only solemn hour I ever spent with Kilmer. I think it well to record here what he deeply impressed upon me: that it was this searing test of his spirit which had come upon him in the affliction of his daughter that fixed his religion.

Kilmer did not become a great patriot when his country entered the world war. He was, of course, the same in fibre then as before. Only then was known to him and visible to others what was latent

in his heart. And in this sense it was, I think, that it was clear to him that he did not become, but had always been a Catholic, though he had not earlier realised it. He tried all things and held fast to that which he found good. He was inwardly driven to seek until his spirit found its home. That only the time of his conversion was, in a sense, accidental, and that the conversion itself was inevitable, must be evident in the fact that he was never really himself before he became, as we say, a convert. Then his fluid spirituality, his yearning sense of religion, was stabilized. What is the "secret," as we say, of all that has been told of his ability? His courage, his mental and physical energy, were, manifestly, unusual. But his character, in the faith that he embraced, found its tempered spring. His talent was a wingéd seed which in the rich soil which had mothered so much art found fructification.

It is not an unsupported assertion to say that he was in his time and place the laureate of the Catholic Church. His sentiments as to the function of a Catholic poet he has expressed very positively in his essays and lectures. He joyed in the new proof given by Helen Parry Eden "that piety and mirth may comfortably dwell together." "A convert to Catholicism," he wrote of Mr. Yeats on Lionel

Johnson, "is not a person who wanders about weeping over autumn winds and dead leaves, mumbling Latin and sniffing incense." Nor is it necessary to lay æsthetic hands on the church's treasures, "and decorate rhymes with rich ecclesiastical imagery and the fragrant names of the saints." But in Faith one may find "that purity and strength which are the guarantees of immortality."

And, once a Catholic, there never was any possibility of mistaking Kilmer's point of view: in all matters of religion, art, economics and politics, as well as in all matters of faith and morals, his point of view was obviously and unhesitatingly Catholic. Considerable as were his gifts and skill as a politician in the business of his career, the veriest zealot could not say that he did not do the most unpolitic things in the service of his faith. A very positive figure, he laboured tirelessly, alternating from one field to another, for the Catholic Church.

As a brilliant interpretative critic of Catholic writers, such as Crashaw, Patmore, Francis Thompson, Lionel Johnson and Belloc, he brought, I think I may venture to say, an altogether new touch into Catholic journalism in America, a striking and distinguished blend of "piety and mirth," which had the rare and highly effective quality of

being both engaging and highly illuminating even to, as Kilmer would amiably have said, the Pagan. Impetus, of course, was given to his style in this by his admiration for the brilliant school of English Catholic journalists, an impetus doubtless accelerated by the personal acquaintance with Belloc, the Chestertons and the Meynells he gained in a flying visit to England in 1914 to rescue his mother from war difficulties in London; when, during a few odd moments before his return, he established a lively connection with the Northcliffe papers and *T. P.'s Weekly*. Even so, Kilmer almost, or quite, alone transplanted this particular spark; and his note of witty common sense and spiritual sensibility was particularly Kilmerian, too.

One day about four years ago the village Post Office at Mahwah did a totally unprecedented and most extraordinary business in outgoing mail, and Kilmer was again multiplied manifold. The neat circulars which he had printed and with which he stuffed the mail box announced that the author of "Trees," a member of the staff of the *New York Times*, etc., etc., "offered the following lectures for the coming season." The result may best be epitomised in the parable of the gentleman who cast his bread upon the waters to have it come back to

him in the form of sardine sandwiches. The rapid development of Kilmer's lecture business, which soon assumed the proportions of no mean career in itself, immensely extended his force as a quickening influence in the Catholic world. Before societies and educational institutions in many places, frequently travelling as far as Notre Dame, Indiana, and Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, he flung his bright portraits of "seekers after that real but elusive thing called beauty, a thing which they found in their submission to her who is the mother of all learning, all culture, and all the arts, the Catholic Church."

V

As a literary lecturer and a reader of his own poems before secular audiences his success was no less abundant. In "the only combination of its kind since Bill Nye and James Whitcomb Riley," as the circular of the J. B. Pond Lyceum Bureau stated it, "the young American Poet" and the author of "Pigs is Pigs" contributed considerably to the lightening of the rigours of existence by an extended repetition of "a joint evening of readings from their works." Ellis Parker Butler, in a letter before me, writes of his partner on the programme:

He was a most charming travelling companion and an ideal team-mate for the purpose we had in mind. I would not have thought of going "on tour" if I had not met Kilmer. My idea was never to "go on tour" but, after I had met Kilmer, to "go on tour with Kilmer." He was altogether lovable and loved.

It would be a decidedly false estimate of Kilmer which failed to note, even with some emphasis, that he was an excellent man of business. He "played the game," in the exceedingly difficult job of earning a thoroughly competent living at the literary profession, with a dexterity which, it was frequently apparent, was at once an inspiration and a despair to those who sought to rival him. The Kilmer cult which grew apace was considerably accelerated by a rich Kilmerian strategy. And he delivered to the little world of intensely intense literary societies and blue-nosed salons which hung upon his lips the pure milk of the word with a strongly humorous consciousness of the feat as a part of the immense sport of living.

Kilmer's "act" as it was observed from behind the scenes is excellently presented by an associate in the office of the *New York Times*. This writer says in the *Philadelphia Press:*

Our editor analysed him into three distinct manners: Kilmer, the literary man; Kilmer, the lecturer; and Kilmer, himself. His first appearance in the office would give you the cue to him for the day. If he came in grinning with his pipe drawing well, we would know that nothing was to be feared; he was himself. When he got his "literary" manner on, the symptom was a tapping of his eyeglass, with his right hand on the fingers of his left. When he appeared in his cutaway coat and a particularly pastoral necktie, we knew that on that day the elderly ladies of This Literary Club or the young ladies of That Academy were to be treated to a discourse on certain aspects of Victorian verse.

One day he came in, obviously decked out for a lecture. Without his having said a word about it, the assistant Sunday editor spoke up: "Let's cut out work this afternoon and hear Kilmer lecture." A look of horror overspread his face. "For heaven's sake, don't," he said. "I couldn't go through with it." I don't believe any of us ever did hear him.

A thing which I found very singular was that, in manner Kilmer was apt, in the two or three later years of his life, to give strangers on their first meeting the impression of being somewhat too dignified for so young a man, of being, as his office associate John Bunker in an admirable, even a remarkable,

portrait of him at this period published in *America*, says, "in fact just a trifle pompous." Mr. Bunker continues: "This was due partly to his physical appearance, and also, insofar as it had any basis in reality, to that protective instinct which quickly teaches a sensitive and imaginative spirit to cast a veil between itself and the outer world."

I myself think this effect had its origin in the same perverse instinct which causes you, immediately after talking with a deaf person, to speak very loud to your next auditor whom you very well know can hear perfectly; that is, it was the result of being keyed up to appearing on an elevated platform before a curious throng. He one time astonished me by the declaration that it was only by, quite early in his life, drastically schooling himself to the task, one then exceedingly trying and hateful to him, that he became able to rise and "speak" at all. The most entertaining recollection, by the way, that I have of the Kilmerian pontifical manner is of a time when he generously invited me to have my shoes polished with him, thrust his hand deep into his pocket to pay the boy, paused, and with a very large gesture directed him to call in again later in the day.

There is first-rate perspicacity in the remark of one of Kilmer's friends, Laurence J. Gomme, that

at one score and ten he was, in the amount that he had lived, about seventy years old. Something of the force and sharpness of Mr. Bunker's evocation of the man as he was at last resides, I think, in the circumstance that here is no blending in the mind of the flower and the bud. He says: "When I first met Kilmer he had just passed his thirtieth year, but he gave me the impression of being somewhat older. I afterwards spoke of this to him, and it was his theory that newspaper work had served to age him. The truth was that it was due not merely to his newspaper work, but generally to the incessant and intense mental activity, the extraordinary and flaming energy, whereby he crowded into ten years the experiences of several ordinary lifetimes." And this touch of the slight Bunker portrait is, I feel, essential to any fuller picture:

As to his physical aspect, he was stockily built and about medium height, and his habit of body was what I should call plump, though later, under the stress of military drill, he changed somewhat in this last respect. I noted at once that he had a remarkable head—well rounded, with broad and high forehead and a very pronounced bulge at the back, covered thickly with dark, reddish-brown hair. But his eyes were his most remarkable feature. They were of the unusual colour of red, and they had a most

peculiar quality which I can only inadequately suggest by saying that they literally glowed. It actually seemed as if there were a fire behind them, not a leaping and blazing fire, but a steady and unquenchable flame which appeared to suffuse the whole eyeball with a brooding light. This characteristic was so striking that I cannot help dilating on it. And I observed later on that this glow, this brooding and somewhat sombre light, never left his eyes even in his most weary or most care-free moments, so that they gave the impression of what I believe was the fact—the impression of a brain behind them which was working intensely and perhaps even feverishly every hour of the waking day.

The better poet Kilmer became, as his friend Richardson Wright says in his admirable "Appreciation" in *The Bellman,* the less like a poet he acted. And after he grew up, he would about as soon have æstheticised, off the platform, as he would have forged a check. Whenever he did refer to poetry as related to himself he, as the slang term has it, took it smiling. One of Kilmer's most pronounced pet aversions was the phrase, utterly mawkish to him, about "prostituting" one's talent. He one time explained to me, with considerable apparent pride, that he used every idea three times: in a poem, in an article, and in a lecture.

Charles Willis Thompson, an editorial writer of the *New York Times,* and to whom belongs the credit of first taking, as editor of the *Sunday Magazine* and *Book Review,* Kilmer's "stuff" in any amount, inspired, so to say, the poem "Delicatessen," in this way. Mr. Thompson happened to remark to Kilmer that of course there were a lot of things which couldn't be treated in poetry. Kilmer declared he would like to know what they were. Mr. Thompson cast about in his mind for the most ridiculous theme for a poem he could think of, and finally proclaimed that no one could possibly write a poem about such a thing as a delicatessen shop. "I'll write a poem about a delicatessen shop," Kilmer promptly replied. "It will be a long poem. I'll sell it to a high-brow magazine. It will be much admired. And it will be a good poem." He insisted on betting on this the sum of several dollars.

The origin of "The Twelve-Forty-Five" I do not exactly know. But I remember shortly before that poem was written, sitting disgusted and miserable with Kilmer in that horrible "Jersey City shed" waiting for the midnight train. Taking out of his mouth that villainously large, fifty-cent pipe (mentioned in all genuine appreciations) Kilmer, with a fervour almost violent, suddenly exclaimed: "I

certainly do like railroad stations! They are fine places!" The very famous poem "The White Ships and The Red" (a poem so wonderfully effective that it was at once reprinted all over the country and in Europe) was a newspaper assignment. He rather liked the poem when he saw it in the paper; though, with his feet cocked up on his desk, he spoke apologetically of what he felt to be the failure of the latter stanzas to link up perfectly with the first, explaining that a luncheon appointment, at which he chatted for an hour or two, had split the writing of it into two sittings. That the author of this "Lusitania" poem thoroughly felt and meant what he said, is, I fancy, sufficiently proven by the event to permit of this being told.

The point is, that Kilmer was a poet, an artist of a high order, a perfectly conscious master of what he was doing. The febrile gush of emotion he loathed. He knew finely that:

It is stern work, it is perilous work, to thrust your hand in the sun
And pull out a spark of immortal flame to warm the hearts of men.

There was nothing accidental about the effect of his own verse, any more than there was "luck" in his

worldly success. He achieved the one as he did the other by a masculine heart and mind. And while all things were necessary and joyous, it was impossible not to feel that, after all, throughout his day "the rhymer's honest trade" was his primary concern.

He was sufficiently grounded in literature to feel, as Mr. Le Gallienne says, no "weariness with those literary methods which had sufficed for Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton, or Catullus or Bion, or François Villon—content, with reverent ambition, to tread that immortal path."

In his religious mysticism a trace, and more than a trace, has been found of Crashaw, of Vaughan, of Herbert, and of Belloc and Chesterton. And there is no difficulty at all about finding in Kilmer hints of Patmore, and there may be easily recognised something of the accents of A. E. Housman and of Edwin Arlington Robinson. He did, indeed, to put it in a racy phrase, have the drop on those who do not know that all art that endures must have its roots in a constant interrogation of the "unimpeachable testimony" of the ages. His song was as old as the hills, and as fresh as the morning. Precisely in this, in fact, is his remarkableness, his originality, as a contemporary poet; and in this will be, I think,

his abiding quality. "Simple and direct, yet not without subtle magic," wrote Father James J. Daly, S.J., in a review of "Trees and Other Poems," printed in *America,* his verse "seems artlessly naïve, yet it possesses deep undercurrents of masculine and forceful thought; it is ethical in its seriousness, and yet as playful and light-hearted as sunlight and shadows under summer oaks." And this admirable summing up of Kilmer's talent leaves little more in the way of direct criticism to be said.

Mr. Le Gallienne with felicitous tact of phrase has touched upon this, that "no young poet of our time has so reverently, on so many pages, in so many different ways, so playfully at times, as in that masterpiece of playful reverence, 'A Blue Valentine,' woven through the texture of his song the love of his lady—that lady 'Aline,' whose name will be gently twined about his as long as the printed word endures." A misquotation in the *Ladies' Home Journal* led to an interesting tribute to the author of "Trees." Many readers of the *Journal* were somewhat startled to find the editor attributing to John Masefield the lines:

> A tree that looks at God all day
> And lifts her leafy arms to pray.

The following issue of the magazine contained this correction and acknowledgment by Mr. Bok:

I am free to confess that I did not know the correct author. I had been reading John Masefield that morning and unconsciously wrote his name as the author of these lines. A number of friends have pointed to the error and supplied the knowledge. The author is Joyce Kilmer, and to him I owe, and here express, my sense of deep apology. The exquisite lines were worthy of John Masefield, but that does not make them less worthy of their rightful author, as all will agree who read his beautiful work in his book "Trees and Other Poems."

As one, somewhat effusive commentator has remarked, "Trees" just could not be confined within the covers of a book. At once reprinted in newspapers throughout the United States (and still being so reprinted) it was crowned in that warmest of all ways in which a work of literature can be honoured, by being cut out by the world and pasted in its hat. In one version it reads, in part, in this way:

Cuando contemplo un arbol pienso: nunca vere un poema tan bello y tan intenso.
Un arbol silencioso que con ansia se aferra a la dulce y jugosa entrans de la tierra.

Un arbol que mirando los cielos se extansia y en oracion levanta los brazos noche y dia.

Many of Kilmer's poems have been translated into Spanish by Salomon de la Selva, Enriquez Urenia and others, and have appeared in a number of prominent South American papers.

In a letter from France to Edward W. Cook, who in quest of material for a book on contemporary poets had written Kilmer asking several questions, Kilmer commented, among other things, on his "earlier efforts in poetry" (as the questionnaire apparently had put it), in a manner which is evidence again of how perfectly well he knew what he was about. "If what I nowadays write is considered poetry," he announced, "then I became a poet in November, 1913." Admirable for hard-headedness, directness and precision, it is a statement which leaves the critic no point upon which to take issue. His early poems "were only the exercises of an amateur, imitations, useful only as technical training." The peculiar thing about these highly skilful experiments in various forms of craftsmanship is that they were so very much better as poems than the derivative efforts usually written at this period of apprenticeship, "so free," as Mr. Le Gal-

lienne notes, "from those artistic immaturities which have made many old great poets angrily denounce unlicensed reprinters of their 'first editions.'" And in this fact they have a decided, and a perfectly legitimate, interest for the observer of the development of his talent—though Kilmer declared "they were worthless, that is, all of them which preceded a poem called 'Pennies,' which you will find in my book 'Trees and Other Poems.'" He added, "I want all of my poems written before that to be forgotten."

He was writing, one remembers, to a gentleman with whom he was so slightly acquainted that he addressed him as "Dear Mr. Cook," with the measure of whose sympathy and critical acumen, it is to be inferred, he was not conversant, and who presumably was about to estimate (with what perspective he could not perceive) his earliest productions. It were better to head off any uncertainty in the matter. Also, we all know, one's hot impatience with one's strivings of yesterday is mellowed by time into an amiable and appreciative tolerance of one's earnest efforts of twenty years ago. It is difficult to think that Kilmer at fifty would have had an unjust scorn of those charming exercises on the poetic scales he wrote at twenty-one.

Anyhow, no man can, by decree or otherwise, obliterate his past; both the good and the bad that he has done continue to pursue him. Ten times thrice happy is he, rarest of men, who, like Kilmer, never penned a line or said a word or did a deed that can arise to bring confusion to those that love him. The world does not willingly let die those verses on which glistens the dew of his tender youth. They are brought forth for praise by no mean critics in tribute to his memory. And in conformity with the wishes of those most jealous of his good name as a poet a representative selection of his early poems is reprinted in these volumes.

He that lives by the pen shall perish by the pen, saith the wisdom of James Huneker. For a sapling poet, within a few short years and by the hard business of words, to attain to a secretary and a butler and a family of, at length, four children, is a modern Arabian Nights Tale. Equally impossible is it, seemingly, to accomplish another thing, which is a remarkable part of Kilmer's distinction. From first to last, from the verses contributed to *Moods* in 1909 to the last poem he wrote, "The Peacemaker," printed in the *Saturday Evening Post* in October, 1918, Kilmer was a poet's poet. "A pretty good poet," said such a poet (shaking his head at his con-

viction of the truth of this) as Bliss Carman. His poems were repeatedly adjudged high places among the best poems read before the Poetry Society. Among competitive honours, under the name of "John Langdon" he won easily enough with his poem, "The Annunciation," first prize in the Marian Poetry contest conducted by *The Queen's Work,* in July, 1917, an award competed for by a great number of poets, including many in other countries. He was a poet's poet who declared (with considerable vehemence, I remember) that he certainly wished he had written "Casey At The Bat." He one time said in praise of a book of essays that it was "that kind of glorified reporting which is poetry." As a singer of the simpler annals of humanity his place will draw closer and closer, I think, to that of the most widely loved poet of our own era. Only the name of James Whitcomb Riley expresses in greater measure the rich gift of speaking with authentic song to the simplest hearts. A man who believes that churches are devices of the devil and literature a syrup for crack-brained females can enjoy, with profit to his soul, "The House With Nobody In it," "Dave Lilly" and "The Servant Girl and the Grocer's Boy" equally with "The Old Swimmin'-Hole" and "Little Orphant Annie."

If Colonel Roosevelt had never done anything other than what he has done in writing, he would undoubtedly be highly esteemed as an American man of letters. And people have made very creditable reputations as humourists who never wrote anything like as humorous essays as those of Joyce Kilmer. They fairly reek with the joy of life. They explode with intellectual robustness. They are fragrant in fancy, richly erudite in substance, touch-and-go in manner, poetic in feeling, rocking with mirth, and display an extraordinary *flair* for style. If it should seem that I am not here measuring my words I suggest a reference to a piece of documentary evidence called "The Gentle Art of Christmas Giving," a "Sunday story" in the *New York Times,* here reprinted. Writing at top-notch speed, never looking again at what he had written, intentionally producing a readily marketable commodity, from which profit must be realised quickly, Kilmer was an exceedingly rare bird in America; that is, a belletristic journalist. There is always the touch to his work of a man of letters. Decidedly Bellocian, Chestertonian, certainly his humorous essays are. But that it was a good deal more an affinity of mind with, than an imitation of, those splendidly humorous English philosophers is borne

out by this: Joyce Kilmer did not talk poetry, but he did talk exactly like his essays, which admirably present the brave humorous wisdom of the man as his intimate friends knew him.

Official critical authority did not dampen his verve. As a contributing editor of "Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature," he supplied the articles on Madison Cawein, John Masefield, William Vaughn Moody and Francis Thompson. He contributed prefaces to various volumes of standard authors. Excellent examples of this department of his activity are his Introduction to Thomas Hardy's "The Mayor of Casterbridge" in the Modern Library, his introduction to the American edition of the "Verses" of Hilaire Belloc, and the introduction to the volume "Dreams and Images," his anthology of Catholic poets. The Introduction to this Anthology is dated 165th Regiment, Camp Mills, Mineola, N. Y., August, 1917, just a year before Sergeant Kilmer's death in battle. Doubtless few know that at one time Kilmer had drawn a contract to write a "Life" of Father Tabb. Because of peculiar complications in the situation this enterprise, most unfortunately, fell through. In 1916 Kilmer was called to the faculty of the School of Journalism of New York University, in

succession to Arthur Guiterman, to lecture on "Magazine and Newspaper Verse." The object of the course, which was open to outsiders as well as to those enrolled in the School of Journalism, was to familiarise the students with the practical side of writing verse for publication.

VI

It seems rather a misnomer, and something of an absurdity, to say that Kilmer was ever neutral in anything. But in the political sense he was a neutral, and, if it may be put that way, neutral to a pronounced degree, preceding the entrance of the United States into the war. His keen feeling for the sturdy virtues and robust customs of Old England, Merrie England, was of course, patent. His delight in London, and the English countryside, which he knew from a child, was manifest. The pillars of his fairly large literature were, of course, English. His profound sense of integrity was violently jolted by the violation of Belgium. As the war went on, however, he developed an attitude which was quite capable of being interpreted as Pro-German, by anyone interested in so interpreting it. The explanation of this attitude is simple enough. Instinctively a combative character intel-

lectually, his humorous essays, which expressed him so intimately, almost without exception found their spring in his running counter to some current idea. As he one time remarked, he was "bored by feminism, futurism, free love;" and, too, he was invariably for the under dog. It may seem rather grotesque to present Germany by implication as an under dog in the early years of the war; the point is, the force of the argument was so overwhelmingly against Germany that Kilmer reacted to this in a characteristic fashion, stood boldly against the current, and was, in fact, a neutral—until the sinking of the Lusitania. All reports agree, including even reports from sources of strong anti-English feeling where Kilmer's inclination to see what could be said for Germany was coveted, that from this point on his manner was altogether hostile to Germany. Outside of his Lusitania poem he did not, so far as I know, denounce the deed; but the unanimity and the precision with which the change in him is fixed by all who observed him is striking.

Kilmer's successive literary passions were a curious medley. He seemed to have been born with a great love for Scott, and he held stoutly to Sir Walter throughout the years. In his burly days he found a humorous sport in defending, with jovial

emphasis, the old-fashioned chivalrous romance against the scientific modern novel. In his æsthetic period he had a touch, hardly more, of Oscar Wilde, though early in his literary career he experienced a rather severe case of Swinburneitus. Some time shortly after this he was very much intrigued by the Celtic revival. Shaemas O'Sheel, a friend dating back to Columbia days, bears testimony that an early boast of Kilmer's was that an ancestor of his had been hanged for taking a rebel's part in 'ninety-eight. And though as we know, Kilmer's immediate ancestry was not Irish, a Gaelic enthusiast who has made a specialty of the Irish language, suggests in his ardour, that the name Kilmer is a derivation of Mac Gilla Mor. At any rate, an affection for Ireland—her literature, her lore, her traditions, and her people—was indeed natural with him.

In his Yeats period Kilmer had about chosen "Nine Bean Rows" as the name of his house then in the course of construction, though it was not altogether "of clay and wattles made." The thing which deterred him from this decision was that persons unacquainted with the poem "Innisfree," to whom he spoke of the matter, conceived his address as Number Nine Beanrose Avenue. What a funny street, they said, that is. Literary merely, of

course, that; and though a part of the whole, remote from later, deeper and graver things. Something inherently Irish in Kilmer undoubtedly was felt by many, Irish themselves and very much so, who, in some cases, are "quite certain" that the fact of their being Irish was the reason why he regarded them and their work as writers with friendship. He did, indeed, like all manner of Irish. He liked the Irish fairies, he liked Lady Gregory, he liked most decidedly the poor Irish people who went to the Catholic church, and (as he later showed), of all soldiers, Irish soldiers he liked best.

Romantic Ireland is not old;
For years untold her youth will shine,
Her heart is fed on Heavenly bread,
The blood of martyrs is her wine.

Everything chivalrous and sacrificial appealing to his deepest instincts, he felt noble "delight in hopes that were vain." It is not at all improbable that had he been an Irishman born and resident in Ireland he would have been among the martyrs of Easter Week. In certain qualities of his soul a kinship with these spirits may readily be traced. Some of them, I have been told, he knew personally; and his reverence for Plunkett he has written.

There is no rope can strangle song,
  And not for long death takes his toll;
No prison bars can dim the stars,
  Nor quicklime eat the living soul.

And all that Kilmer wrote, every line of it, he wrote in two ways; he wrote it in words, and he wrote it in his acts. When the idea of the Poets' Meeting to express the sympathy of American poets with the three Irish martyred poets of Easter Week, Pearse, MacDonough and Plunkett, first occurred to Eleanor Rogers Cox, she asked Kilmer's advice about it over the telephone. And he said, "Go ahead, I'll back you up," with the result that the meeting, a success, took place in Central Park, with Edwin Markham presiding, Kilmer, Margaret Widdemer, Miss Cox, Louis Untermeyer, and many other representative poets taking part.

When you say of the making of ballads and songs
  that it is a woman's work,
You forget all the fighting poets that have been in
  every land.
There was Byron, who left all his lady-loves, to
  fight against the Turk,
And David, the singing king of the Jews, who was
  born with a sword in his hand.

It was yesterday that Rupert Brooke went out to
the Wars and died,
And Sir Philip Sidney's lyric voice was as sweet as
his arm was strong;
And Sir Walter Raleigh met the axe as a lover
meets his bride,
Because he carried in his soul the courage of his
song.

Indeed, in the logical scheme of things (or, at any rate, in Joyce Kilmer's scheme of things) the poet is a soldier, an idealist with the courage of his song; and, in a manner of speaking, all soldiers are poets, whether or not they ever pen a line, for they give supreme expression to the conviction of their soul. And then, as Christopher Morley has finely written in his tribute to Kilmer, "the poet must go where the greatest songs are singing." To anyone who knew Kilmer it would have been perfectly dumfounding if, when war was declared between his country and Germany, he had *not* done exactly as he did. It is inconceivable—to picture him moving about here, from restaurant to office, in this hour. Flatly, the thing can't be done. With him, when he joined the army, it was only one fight more, the best, and as it proved, the last.

He hated many things, but I believe that of all

things he hated most a pacifist—a pacifist in anything. He was a fighter. He fought for his home, stone by stone; he fought for his renown. His conception of the church was the Church Militant. His thoughts dwelt continually on warrior-saints. He believed in the nobility of war and the warrior's calling, so long as the cause was holy, or believed to be holy. As he saw it, there was no question as to his duty. This I know, you might as well have asked Niagara Falls why it pours over its ledge, as have discussed with Kilmer the matter of his going to war. That was, in its way, just such another force of nature. As to what might happen to him, it is hardly necessary to remark that his faith told him that that would be all right, too. John Bunker was among the last to bid him farewell. There is the Kilmerian splendour in what he wrote:

You didn't pose, self-conscious of your lot,
Or speak of what might be or might have been;
You always thought heroics simply rot,
And so you merely wore your old-time grin.

Kilmer had first joined the Officers' Reserve Training corps. He soon resigned from this. In less than three weeks after the United States entered the war he enlisted as a private in the Seventh

Regiment, National Guard, New York. His own statement was: "I haven't time for Plattsburg: had too much work to finish, but I had to get in." The Regiment was mustered into the Federal Service on July 15, 1917; and Kilmer expected to go to training camp somewhere in the South for a couple of months, then to be sent to "France, or Russia, or Cuba, or Mexico or somewhere else." He had a great distaste for going to Russia, because he disliked cold climates. He one time expressed a decided aversion to a book commonly held to be quite good. When asked what was the matter with it, he denounced it as being about "one of those cold countries." It would not, of course, have been Kilmer had he not found elation in the distinguished and picturesque character of the crack regiment to which he belonged. "We are the oldest outfit in the Guard—Lafayette reviewed us in 1824 and Joffre two weeks ago." If you had not seen the dress uniform of "the Seventh" you heard all about it at lunch. And "hard newspaper man" as he was, he became even "harder" now. "Can't hurt my feelings," he wrote requesting a friend to be quite frank with him. "Hard military character, seriously considering acquisition of habit of chewing tobacco."

Shortly before the Seventh left New York for

Spartanburg, South Carolina, Kilmer was transferred, at his own request, to the 165th Infantry, U. S. A., formerly the famous old "Fighting Sixty-ninth," New York, a unit of the Rainbow Division, assembled at Camp Mills, Mineola, Long Island. He was most particular to impress upon his friends the point that he had been transferred at his own volition. I do not know that he ever said so, in so many words, but I gathered from him the impression that a considerable part of his motive in having himself transferred was occasioned by his belief that the 165th would go sooner than the Seventh to the battlefield. Then, too, as we know, he was "half Irish"; and an Irish-American regiment doubtless was a powerful magnet to him. In the 165th the people he liked best of all were "the wild Irish boys who left Ireland a few years ago, some of them to escape threatened conscription, and travelled about the country in gangs, generally working on the railroads. They have delightful songs that have never been written down, but sung in vagabonds' camps and country jails. I have got some of the songs down and hope to get more—'The Boston Burglar' —'Sitting in My Cell All Alone'—they are a fine, a veritable Irish-American folk-lore."

Kilmer at this time was the father of four chil-

dren, named respectively Kenton Sinclair, Rose, Deborah Clanton and Michael Barry. One day he appeared in my office on an errand of business relating to the handling of his literary property. He was, in outward effect, perfectly composed, an admirable picture of a young soldier. It was then, in what followed, that he displayed the most extraordinary, the most amazing, measure of spiritual stature that I ever observed in any man or ever read of in any human book. Settled, with his customary air, in my chair, he demanded some pipe tobacco. I had none. And for this he heartily damned me out. Then he said: "Bob, my affairs are somewhat in disarray." Thinking that perhaps he wanted to borrow two dollars, or something like that, I asked: "What's the matter, Joyce?" "Well," he answered, quite in his ordinary way, "several days ago Rose died; yesterday my son, Christopher, was born; Kenton is with my wife at her mother's; my family is, in fact, very much scattered; I'm expecting to go to France within a few days—and I have many other difficulties." That was all he said as to this. He then talked excellent business. I went to the elevator with him. We shook hands more quietly than usual; he said, "Good-bye, Bob;" and the door of the car closed upon him, standing erect in his mil-

itary overcoat, looking somewhat serious. That was all.

From Company H. Kilmer was transferred, within a short time, to Headquarters Company, and exchanged his eight hours a day of violent physical exercise ("most deadening to the brain, a useful anodyne for one, coming as it did after my grief," he wrote in an intimate letter) for exacting but "interesting" statistical work. Though called Senior Regimental Statistician he continued to rank as a private. His work was under the direction of the Regimental Chaplain, Father Francis Patrick Duffy. He was thankful, he wrote from Mineola in a letter at this time, that he was not with the Seventh at Spartanburg, as from Mineola he could telephone to his wife every night, and he said: 'I'll be an accomplished cuss when I get back from the wars—I'll know how to typewrite and to serve Mass and to sing the 'Boston Burglar.' "

VII

It was "the pleasantest war he had ever attended," so he wrote back from France. "Nice war, nice people, nice country, nice everything," he said on the back of a postcard. To the Reverend James

J. Daly he wrote, "When I next visit Campion, I'll teach you (in addition to 'The Boston Burglar') an admirable song called 'Down in the Heart of the Gas-House District.' I sing it beautifully." And "as a common soldier, I have the privilege of intimacy with the French peasants—and I find them edifyingly good Catholics." But his pleasures in war he has told, as none but the author of "Trees" and "Main Street" could tell them, in his letters. What he never told must be read between the lines. When the war was over, he said, he never wanted again to go far away from Browne's Chop House and Shanley's Bar. Though it is firmly held in the background, there is in all that he wrote from France, it seems to me, a reflection that his life was, so to say, somewhat in disarray. And clearly enough, though proudly, too, in the few poems that he sent back he spoke his body's pain:

Upon his will he binds a radiant chain,
For Freedom's sake he is no longer free.
It is his task, the slave of liberty,
With his own blood to wipe away a stain.
That pain may cease, he yields his flesh to pain,
To banish war, he must a warrior be;
He dwells in Night, eternal Dawn to see,
And gladly dies, abundant life to gain.

And:

My shoulders ache beneath my pack
(Lie easier, Cross, upon His back).

I march with feet that burn and smart
(Tread, Holy feet, upon my heart).

Men shout at me who may not speak
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek).

I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear.

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
Thy Agony of Bloody Sweat?)

My rifle hand is stiff and numb
(From Thy pierced palm red rivers come).

And in the closing lines of this poem certainly is given, as fully as anything can be told in this world, the answer to the question, How did the war most affect Joyce Kilmer?—

> Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
> Than all the hosts of land and sea.
>
> So let me render back again
> This millionth of Thy gift. Amen.

Though he said, "I have very little chance to read contemporary poetry out here," he did read, as he says, "what do you suppose? The 'Oxford Book of English Verse.'" And he hoped that contemporary poetry was

> reflecting the virtues which are blossoming on the blood-soaked soil of this land—courage, and self-abnegation, and love, and faith—this last not faith in some abstract goodness, but faith which God Himself founded and still rules. France has turned to her ancient faith with more passionate devotion than she has shown for centuries. I believe that America is learning the same lesson from war, and is cleansing herself of cynicism and pessimism and materialism and the lust for novelty which has hampered our national development. I hope that our poets already see this tendency and rejoice in it—if they do not they are unworthy of their craft.

"Just what effect the war would have had on Kilmer had he been spared is of course an entirely elusive topic," has said one very able and on the whole most valuable commentator, speaking from the testimony then in hand, and voicing, I fancy, an idea still rather general. It is not now, I think, an elusive topic at all, but a matter as plain as a pikestaff. And the matter is, by the way, the second of

the two most indispensable pages in Kilmer's story. It is a page in which his character underwent another metamorphosis as consequential in its effect on his talent even, if that could be possible, as his conversion to the Catholic faith.

Kilmer left the United States a professional writer from his twenty-third year, and one of the most accomplished, prolific and industrious journalists of his day. Writing with him had become a habit almost as natural as speech. It was his intention when he left New York to write a war book. He discussed this project with his publishers even so definitely as to have settled upon a title: "Here and There With the Fighting Sixty-Ninth." As time passed it became puzzling why no "copy" of any kind came from him. And as still more time passed this matter assumed for me an element of more than considerable mystery. It was incomprehensible because none of the reasons which would ordinarily apply in such a situation explained Kilmer's case to me. If it had been anyone else I should have concluded that he was unable to find time to write anything. But precisely the point about Kilmer was that he did the impossible: it was quite his habit to, in the racy phrase, "get away with" situations which would have floored anyone

else. It was to my mind an illogical hypothesis that he could be frustrated by obstacles. And I felt that, inexplicable as it was for Kilmer to fail in anything or to neglect any opportunity, he was here failing in justice to his career. How was it in fact? As it had always been. He was receiving the light opened to him. There could not be, I submit, any more telling proof that he had genius, the capacity to become an absolutely great writer, than this: that in this war which has prompted more people to write, and has produced more "copy" than nearly all the other events of history put together, he ceased altogether to be a journalist of any kind; that is, even the instinct of the journalist dropped from him, when he touched it.

He had had no thought, he says, of attempting to report the war: "If I had, I'd have come over as a correspondent instead of as a soldier." All his days he had been trying to get closer and closer to the heart of life. In the war his profound instinct for humanity found fulfilment. Of his close comrades he writes: "Say a prayer for them all, they're brave men and good, and splendid company. Danger shared together and hardships mutually borne develops in us a sort of friendship I never knew in civilian life, a friendship clean of jealousy and

gossip and envy and suspicion—a fine, hearty, roaring, mirthful sort of thing, like an open fire of whole pine-trees in a giant's castle."

He was at present "a poet trying to be a soldier." "To tell the truth, I am not at all interested in writing nowadays, except in so far as writing is the expression of something beautiful. And I see daily and nightly the expression of beauty in action instead of words, and I find it more satisfactory." "My days of hack writing are over, for a time at least." Upon his return to civilian life his civilian work "may be straight reporting." As for "that mob of war writers (thank God—let me pharisaically say—that I am not one of them)." The book? "The only sort of book I care to write about the war is the sort people will read after the war is over—a century after it is over!"

Kilmer's "Holy Ireland," a sketch of a lodging for the night enjoyed by a little group of Irish-American soldiers at a farmhouse in France, is the only piece of prose writing of any extent at all that came from him overseas. He himself wrote of it to his publishers: "I sent you a prose sketch 'Holy Ireland,' which represents the best prose writing I can do nowadays." It is unmistakably a piece of literature, that is to say, though slight enough in

substance, a work of firm and exquisite and enduring art.

In a letter to the Reverend Edward F. Garesché, S.J., one of the last he wrote, the following paragraphs occur:

I have written very little—two prose sketches and two poems—since I left the States, but I have a rich store of memories. Not that what I write matters—I have discovered, since some unforgettable experiences, that writing is not the tremendously important thing I once considered it. You will find me less a bookman when you next see me, and more, I hope, a man.

And he ends with these words: "Pray for me, my dear Father, that I may love God more and that I may be unceasingly conscious of Him—that is the greatest desire I have."

Though he gloried in being a private soldier, it is quite evident, too, that he was charmed with his promotion. "I am now a sergeant," appears on the back of every copy of the well-known "tin-hat" post-card, and in every letter near this date. In more than one intimate letter he says: "I'll never be anything higher. To get a commission I'd have to go away for three months to school, and then

whether or not I was made an officer—I'd be sent to some outfit other than this, and I don't want to leave this crowd. I'd rather be a sergeant in the 69th than a lieutenant in any other regiment in the world." "A volunteer regiment, the bravest and best regiment in the army." "I have a new stripe —an inverted chevron of bright gold on the left cuff for six months' service . . . . let my children be proud of it." And, "a long moustache I have."

For a while he had worked in the Adjutant's Office, having special charge of recording and reporting statistics. Then he was no longer ("thank God!") doing statistics. Someone over here had said that he had "a bullet-proof job." "I had one, but succeeded, after two months intriguing, in getting rid of it." "At that time I was just an office hack—now I am a soldier, in the most fascinating branch of the service there is—sheer romance, night and day—especially night." He had become attached to the Regimental Intelligence Section, working as an observer—"very amusing work," "wonderful life!"—"the finest job in the army!" But "I don't know what I'll be able to do in civilian life—unless I become a fireman!" "I am having a delightful time, but it won't break my heart for the war to end."

"Rouge Bouquet" was his "first attempt at versification in a dug-out." He had lived in "billets, dug-outs, trenches, observatories and all sorts of queer places." And at length, he was "(after a most violent and amusing month) resting (six hours out of every twenty-four!) in a beautiful place, among the firs and pines on a lovely mountain top, from which I can see strange things." "I sleep on a couch made soft with deftly laid young spruce boughs and eat at a table set under good, kind trees." And with that inimitable, irrepressible and incomparable Kilmerian pleasure he contemplated what he called "my senility":

I picture myself at sixty, with a long white moustache, a pale gray tweed suit, a very large panama hat, I can see my gnarled but beautifully groomed hands as they tremblingly pour out the glass of dry sherry which belongs to every old man's breakfast. I cannot think of myself at seventy or eighty—I grow hysterical with applause—I am lost in a delirium of massive ebony canes, golden snuff-boxes, and dainty silk hats.

"When we first met over here," wrote Kilmer's friend Charles L. O'Donnell, Chaplain 332d Infantry, in a letter to Thomas Walsh which should be written into the record, "he was in the personnel

department of his regiment, having had his time of service in the field and done some particularly good work in the intelligence line. He was then about to go into the intelligence permanently and so avid of it was he as to be ready to relinquish his hard-earned sergeant's chevrons. In the event, however, that sacrifice was not demanded. After this change in his work he was much more agreeably placed, in particular he had more freedom and more time to see his friends. He was worshipped by the men about him. I have heard them speak with awe of his coolness and his nerve in scouting patrols in No Man's Land. As an intelligence man he made personally a few very valuable discoveries: this was when I was with him in our comparatively quiet sector. I can only conceive that he distinguished himself later in the larger opportunities that came his way." The letter continues:

We were both in the army but he was also of it. I was amazed to find him so quickly become a soldier with the soldier's point of view. But he had seen so much more than I, even then, and each day in this war is equivalent to long campaigns of other times. I felt, and was a rookie beside him. He had got a perspective on his life at home that made him smile with indulgent pity on some literary aspects

of it. I spoke of what must have been his earlier views, the good he was doing and the need of doing it. But he was not ready to relinquish a position he had bought at the price of suffering, cold, hunger, fatigue, with the hourly self denials that military discipline means. Not that he spoke of these things in this way, but I knew they had gone into the creation of his new stand and I knew in my heart it *was* higher ground.

A closer witness is Sergeant-Major Lemist Esler, who served side by side with Kilmer in the Marne advance. Shortly afterward returned to the United States for service as an instructor at an army cantonment, he said in an interview in the *New York Times:* "The front was his goal and no sooner had the regiment reached France than he made every possible effort to be transferred."

He finally had himself moved to the Intelligence Department. It was in that department that he was elevated to the rank of Sergeant. I was supply sergeant at the time and Joyce Kilmer was a perfect trial to me. He would always be doing more than his orders called for—that is, getting much nearer to the enemy's positions than any officer would ever be inclined to send him. Night after night he would lie out in No Man's Land, crawling through barbed wires, in an effort to locate enemy

positions, and enemy guns, and tearing his clothes to shreds. On the following day he would come to me for a new uniform.

"There was something of what the Scots call 'fey' about him as a soldier," is the testimony of the chaplain of the 165th Infantry, Father Duffy. "He was absolutely the coolest and most indifferent man in the face of danger I have ever seen. It was not for lack of love of life, for he enjoyed his life as a soldier—his only cross was distance from home. It was partly from his inborn courage and devotion —he would not stint his sacrifice—partly his deep and real belief that what God wills is best."

Once Marshal Foch's advance began, Kilmer seems to have been constantly in the thick of the fighting. In the *New York Evening Sun* of August 8 a correspondent told how a party composed of Major Donovan, Joyce Kilmer and John Kayes advanced to the edge of a wood and captured a German dressed in an American uniform.

"Joyce was one of those soldiers who had a romantic love of death in battle," Father Duffy has added, "and it could not have missed him in time." No, the stars move in their appointed courses; and there are certain things written aforetime. While

he had life there was a defiant hope among us who knew his great gift for triumph that somehow this would see him through, that even over the inevitable he would prevail. But Destiny would not have been her immemorial self had she stayed her tragic hand from this shining figure, type and symbol in his taking of her unscrutable ways with man. And, somehow, in his death his life was all of a piece, and one cannot but admire the poetic justice of his end.

Never fear but in the skies
Saints and angels stand
Smiling with their holy eyes
On this new-come band

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Your souls shall be where the heroes are
And your memory shine like the morning-star.

Sergeant Kilmer was killed in action near the Ourcq, July 30, 1918. "He had," runs the report in *The Stars and Stripes,* the newspaper of the American Expeditionary Force, "volunteered his services to the major of the foremost battalion because his own battalion would not be in the lead that day." From the report of Sergeant Esler and a letter (printed in the *New York Times*) to a friend in New York by Alexander Woollcott, dramatic

critic of the *Times* before his service abroad, the facts are established.

At the dawn of a misty Sunday, July 28, the 165th had made a gallant and irresistible charge across the river and up the hill. In the height of the great five days battle for the mastery of the heights which followed Kilmer was killed. It so happened that he was close to the Major when the battalion adjutant fell and, in the emergency of the battle, without commission or appointment, he was serving as a sort of aid to the battalion commander. Discovering that the woods ahead harboured some machine guns, he had reported this fact, and was sent in the lead of a patrol to establish their exact location. When a couple of hours later the battalion advanced into the woods to clear the spot of the enemy, several of Kilmer's comrades caught sight of him lying, as if still scouting, with his eyes bent over a little ridge. So like his living self he was, they called to him, then ran up—to find him dead with a bullet through his brain. He lies buried, we read, beside Lieutenant Oliver Ames at the edge of a little copse that is known as the Wood of the Burned Bridge, so close to the purling Ourcq that, standing by the graveside, one could throw a pebble into its waters. Perhaps ten minutes walk to the

north lies the half obliterated village Seringes, captured by American troops the night before Kilmer was killed. Eloquent of affection in the making of it, the grave is of course, marked by a wooden cross, on which is written, "Sergeant Joyce Kilmer." Then, after the inscription of his company and regiment, is the line: "Killed in Action—July 30, 1918."

It is not a rule to bury enlisted men with officers, but Kilmer had won so much admiration and respect not only from the enlisted men in his company but also from the officers, that the commander of the regiment authorised that his grave be dug on the spot and that he be buried next to the grave of the heroic Lieutenant who had just lost his life.

Sergeant Woollcott was with the regiment in the woods the day they came out of the line to catch their breaths, and the news of Kilmer's death, he says, "greeted me on every turn. The Captain under whom he had been serving for several months, the Major at whose side he fell, stray cooks, doughboys, runners—all shook their heads sorrowfully and talked among themselves of what a good soldier he had been and what an infinite pity it was that the bullet had had to single him out. And in such days as these, there are no platitudes of polite regret. When men, good men and close pals, are falling

about you by hundreds, when every man in the regiment has come out of the fight the poorer for the loss of not one but many friends, there is no time to say pretty things about a man just because he exists no longer. Death is too common to distinguish anyone. So the glowing praise and admiration I heard for Joyce was real—every word of it."

It is, I think, fitting to preserve in a form more durable than its newspaper publication more of this letter. It continues:

I gathered that his stock among men of all ranks had been climbing steadily from the first days when many of them, including myself, felt that he was out of his own element in a rip-roaring regiment. As the regiment's laureate, they all knew him and they knew, too, that he was at work on a history of the regiment. He had become quite an institution, with his arms full of maps as they used to be full of minor poetry, and his mouth full of that imperishable pipe.

They all knew his verse. I found any number of men who had only to fish around in their tattered blouses to bring out the copy of a poem Kilmer wrote in memory of some of their number who were killed by a shell in March. You see that there is a refrain which calls for bugle notes, and I am told that at the funeral services, where the lines were first read, the desperately sad notes of "Taps" sounded faintly from a distant grave when the refrain in-

voked them. The lines were read by Joyce's own beloved Father Duffy, and those who were there told me the tears streamed down the face of every boy in the regiment. They just blubbered.

VIII

Indeed, such was the power of his spirit over other men that even now he has become a legend, his excellence a popular heritage, benefiting and enriching human life. Writing with the pen of all those who knew him in his overcoat of glory and debonair hat, his friend Charles Willis Thompson says: "I had a great affection and a deep admiration and respect for him, different from that which I had for anybody else I knew." And expressing, I think, the heart of innumerable ones who did not chance his way, Booth Tarkington says: "But I had a sense of him as of something fine and of fine promise. I haven't read much that he wrote; but it was like knowing that there was a good picture somewhere in a gallery that I hadn't visited, but might, some day."

The full beauty of his life is known only to God. As religion was the first thing in his life let it be the last thing said of him. In one of his last letters, he wrote to Sister M. Emerentia of St. Joseph's

College, Toronto, Ontario: "Pray that I may love God more. It seems to me that if I can learn to love God more passionately, more constantly, without distractions, that absolutely nothing else can matter. Except while we are in the trenches I receive Holy Communion every morning, so it ought to be all the easier for me to attain this object of my prayers. I got Faith, you know, by praying for it. I hope to get Love the same way."

POEMS FROM FRANCE

ROUGE BOUQUET

IN a wood they call the Rouge Bouquet
There is a new-made grave to-day,
Built by never a spade nor pick
Yet covered with earth ten metres thick.
There lie many fighting men,
Dead in their youthful prime,
Never to laugh nor love again
Nor taste the Summertime.
For Death came flying through the air
And stopped his flight at the dugout stair,
Touched his prey and left them there,
Clay to clay.
He hid their bodies stealthily
In the soil of the land they fought to free
And fled away.
Now over the grave abrupt and clear
Three volleys ring;
And perhaps their brave young spirits hear
The bugle sing:
"Go to sleep!
Go to sleep!
Slumber well where the shell screamed and fell.

Let your rifles rest on the muddy floor,
You will not need them any more.
Danger's past;
Now at last,
Go to sleep!"

There is on earth no worthier grave
To hold the bodies of the brave
Than this place of pain and pride
Where they nobly fought and nobly died.
Never fear but in the skies
Saints and angels stand
Smiling with their holy eyes
  On this new-come band.
St. Michael's sword darts through the air
And touches the aureole on his hair
As he sees them stand saluting there,
  His stalwart sons;
And Patrick, Brigid, Columkill
Rejoice that in veins of warriors still
  The Gael's blood runs.
And up to Heaven's doorway floats,
  From the wood called Rouge Bouquet,
A delicate cloud of buglenotes
  That softly say:
"Farewell!

Farewell!
Comrades true, born anew, peace to you!
Your souls shall be where the heroes are
And your memory shine like the morning-star.
Brave and dear,
Shield us here.
Farewell!"

THE PEACEMAKER

UPON his will he binds a radiant chain,
For Freedom's sake he is no longer free.
It is his task, the slave of Liberty,
With his own blood to wipe away a stain.
That pain may cease, he yields his flesh to pain.
To banish war, he must a warrior be.
He dwells in Night, eternal Dawn to see,
And gladly dies, abundant life to gain.

What matters Death, if Freedom be not dead?
No flags are fair, if Freedom's flag be furled.
Who fights for Freedom, goes with joyful tread
To meet the fires of Hell against him hurled,
And has for captain Him whose thorn-wreathed head
Smiles from the Cross upon a conquered world.

PRAYER OF A SOLDIER IN FRANCE

MY shoulders ache beneath my pack
(Lie easier, Cross, upon His back).

I march with feet that burn and smart
(Tread, Holy Feet, upon my heart).

Men shout at me who may not speak
(They scourged Thy back and smote Thy cheek).

I may not lift a hand to clear
My eyes of salty drops that sear.

(Then shall my fickle soul forget
Thy Agony of Bloody Sweat?)

My rifle hand is stiff and numb
(From Thy pierced palm red rivers come).

Lord, Thou didst suffer more for me
Than all the hosts of land and sea.

So let me render back again
This millionth of Thy gift. Amen.

WHEN THE SIXTY-NINTH COMES BACK

THE Sixty-ninth is on its way—France heard
it long ago,
And the Germans know we're coming, to give them
blow for blow.
We've taken on the contract, and when the job is
through
We'll let them hear a Yankee cheer and an Irish
ballad too.

The Harp that once through Tara's Halls shall
fill the air with song,
And the Shamrock be cheered as the port is
neared by our triumphant throng.
With the Potsdam Palace on a truck and the
Kaiser in a sack,
New York will be seen one Irish green when the
Sixty-ninth comes back.

We brought back from the Border our Flag—'twas
never lost;
We left behind the land we love, the stormy sea we
crossed.

THE SIXTY-NINTH COMES BACK

We heard the cry of Belgium, and France the free
and fair,
For where there's work for fighting-men, the Sixty-
ninth is there.

The Harp that once through Tara's Halls shall
fill the air with song,
And the Shamrock be cheered as the port is
neared by our triumphant throng.
With the Potsdam Palace on a truck and the
Kaiser in a sack,
New York will be seen one Irish green when the
Sixty-ninth comes back.

The men who fought at Marye's Heights will aid us
from the sky,
They showed the world at Fredericksburg how Irish
soldiers die.
At Blackburn Ford they think of us, Atlanta and
Bull Run;
There are many silver rings on the old flagstaff but
there's room for another one.

The Harp that once through Tara's Halls shall
fill the air with song,
And the Shamrock be cheered as the port is
neared by our triumphant throng.

With the Potsdam Palace on a truck and the
Kaiser in a sack,
New York will be seen one Irish green when the
Sixty-ninth comes back.

God rest our valiant leaders dead, whom we cannot
forget;
They'll see the Fighting Irish are the Fighting
Irish yet.
While Ryan, Roe, and Corcoran on History's pages
shine,
A wreath of laurel and shamrock waits the head of
Colonel Hine.

The Harp that once through Tara's Halls shall
fill the air with song,
And the Shamrock be cheered as the port is
neared by our triumphant throng.
With the Potsdam Palace on a truck and the
Kaiser in a sack,
New York will be seen one Irish green when the
Sixty-ninth comes back.

MIRAGE DU CANTONMENT

MANY laughing ladies, leisurely and wise,
Low rich voice, delicate gay cries,
Tea in fragile china cups, ices, macaroons,
Sheraton and Heppelwhite and old thin spoons,
Rather dim paintings on very high walls,
Windows showing lawns whereon the sunlight falls,
Pink and silver gardens and broad kind trees,
And fountains scattering rainbows at the whim of
a breeze,
Fragrance, mirth and gentleness, a Summer day
In a world that has forgotten everything but play.

POEMS AT HOME

WARTIME CHRISTMAS

LED by a star, a golden star,
The youngest star, an olden star,
Here the kings and the shepherds are,
Akneeling on the ground.
What did they come to the inn to see?
God in the Highest, and this is He,
A baby asleep on His mother's knee
And with her kisses crowned.

Now is the earth a dreary place,
A troubled place, a weary place.
Peace has hidden her lovely face
And turned in tears away.
Yet the sun, through the war-cloud, sees
Babies asleep on their mother's knees.
While there are love and home—and these—
There shall be Christmas Day.

MAIN STREET

(For S. M. L.)

I LIKE to look at the blossomy track of the moon
upon the sea,
But it isn't half so fine a sight as Main Street used
to be
When it all was covered over with a couple of feet
of snow,
And over the crisp and radiant road the ringing
sleighs would go.

Now, Main Street bordered with autumn leaves, it
was a pleasant thing,
And its gutters were gay with dandelions early in
the Spring;
I like to think of it white with frost or dusty in the
heat,
Because I think it is humaner than any other street.

A city street that is busy and wide is ground by a
thousand wheels,
And a burden of traffic on its breast is all it ever
feels:
It is dully conscious of weight and speed and of
work that never ends,
But it cannot be human like Main Street, and recog-
nise its friends.

There were only about a hundred teams on Main Street in a day,
And twenty or thirty people, I guess, and some children out to play.
And there wasn't a wagon or buggy, or a man or a girl or a boy
That Main Street didn't remember, and somehow seem to enjoy.

The truck and the motor and trolley car and the elevated train
They make the weary city street reverberate with pain:
But there is yet an echo left deep down within my heart
Of the music the Main Street cobblestones made beneath a butcher's cart.

God be thanked for the Milky Way that runs across the sky,
That's the path that my feet would tread whenever I have to die.
Some folks call it a Silver Sword, and some a Pearly Crown,
But the only thing I think it is, is Main Street, Heaventown.

ROOFS

(For Amelia Josephine Burr)

THE road is wide and the stars are out and the
breath of the night is sweet,
And this is the time when wanderlust should seize
upon my feet.
But I'm glad to turn from the open road and the
starlight on my face,
And to leave the splendour of out-of-doors for a
human dwelling place.

I never have seen a vagabond who really liked to
roam
All up and down the streets of the world and not to
have a home:
The tramp who slept in your barn last night and
left at break of day
Will wander only until he finds another place to
stay.

A gypsy-man will sleep in his cart with canvas over-
head;
Or else he'll go into his tent when it is time for bed.

He'll sit on the grass and take his ease so long as
the sun is high,
But when it is dark he wants a roof to keep away
the sky.

If you call a gypsy a vagabond, I think you do him
wrong,
For he never goes a-travelling but he takes his home
along.
And the only reason a road is good, as every wan-
derer knows,
Is just because of the homes, the homes, the homes
to which it goes.

They say that life is a highway and its milestones
are the years,
And now and then there's a toll-gate where you
buy your way with tears.
It's a rough road and a steep road and it stretches
broad and far,
But at last it leads to a golden Town where golden
Houses are.

THE SNOWMAN IN THE YARD

(For Thomas Augustine Daly)

THE Judge's house has a splendid porch, with pillars and steps of stone,
And the Judge has a lovely flowering hedge that came from across the seas;
In the Hales' garage you could put my house and everything I own,
And the Hales have a lawn like an emerald and a row of poplar trees.

Now I have only a little house, and only a little lot,
And only a few square yards of lawn, with dandelions starred;
But when Winter comes, I have something there that the Judge and the Hales have not,
And it's better worth having than all their wealth —it's a snowman in the yard.

The Judge's money brings architects to make his mansion fair;
The Hales have seven gardeners to make their roses grow;
The Judge can get his trees from Spain and France and everywhere,
And raise his orchids under glass in the midst of all the snow.

But I have something no architect or gardener ever made,
A thing that is shaped by the busy touch of little mittened hands:
And the Judge would give up his lonely estate, where the level snow is laid
For the tiny house with the trampled yard, the yard where the snowman stands.

They say that after Adam and Eve were driven away in tears
To toil and suffer their life-time through, because of the sin they sinned,
The Lord made Winter to punish them for half their exiled years,
To chill their blood with the snow, and pierce their flesh with the icy wind.

But we who inherit the primal curse, and labour for our bread,
Have yet, thank God, the gift of Home, though Eden's gate is barred:
And through the Winter's crystal veil, Love's roses blossom red,
For him who lives in a house that has a snowman in the yard.

A BLUE VALENTINE

(For Aline)

MONSIGNORE,
Right Reverend Bishop Valentinus,
Sometime of Interamna, which is called Ferni,
Now of the delightful Court of Heaven,
I respectfully salute you,
I genuflect
And I kiss your episcopal ring.

It is not, Monsignore,
The fragrant memory of your holy life,
Nor that of your shining and joyous martyrdom,
Which causes me now to address you.
But since this is your august festival, Monsignore,
It seems appropriate to me to state
According to a venerable and agreeable custom,
That I love a beautiful lady.
Her eyes, Monsignore,
Are so blue that they put lovely little blue reflections
On everything that she looks at,
Such as a wall
Or the moon
Or my heart.

A BLUE VALENTINE

It is like the light coming through blue stained glass,
Yet not quite like it,
For the blueness is not transparent,
Only translucent.
Her soul's light shines through,
But her soul cannot be seen.
It is something elusive, whimsical, tender, wanton,
infantile, wise
And noble.
She wears, Monsignore, a blue garment,
Made in the manner of the Japanese.
It is very blue—
I think that her eyes have made it more blue,
Sweetly staining it
As the pressure of her body has graciously given it
form.
Loving her, Monsignore,
I love all her attributes;
But I believe
That even if I did not love her
I would love the blueness of her eyes,
And her blue garment, made in the manner of the
Japanese.

Monsignore,
I have never before troubled you with a request.

The saints whose ears I chiefly worry with my pleas
are the most exquisite and maternal Brigid,
Gallant Saint Stephen, who puts fire in my blood,
And your brother bishop, my patron,
The generous and jovial Saint Nicholas of Bari.
But, of your courtesy, Monsignore,
Do me this favour:
When you this morning make your way
To the Ivory Throne that bursts into bloom with
roses because of her who sits upon it,
When you come to pay your devoir to Our Lady,
I beg you, say to her:
"Madame, a poor poet, one of your singing servants
yet on earth,
Has asked me to say that at this moment he is espe-
cially grateful to you
For wearing a blue gown."

HOUSES

(For Aline)

WHEN you shall die and to the sky
Serenely, delicately go,
Saint Peter, when he sees you there,
Will clash his keys and say:
"Now talk to her, Sir Christopher!
And hurry, Michelangelo!
She wants to play at building,
And you've got to help her play!"

Every architect will help erect
A palace on a lawn of cloud,
With rainbow beams and a sunset roof,
And a level star-tiled floor;
And at your will you may use the skill
Of this gay angelic crowd,
When a house is made you will throw it down,
And they'll build you twenty more.

For Christopher Wren and these other men
Who used to build on earth
Will love to go to work again
If they may work for you.

"This porch," you'll say, "should go this way!"
And they'll work for all they're worth,
And they'll come to your palace every morning,
And ask you what to do.

And when night comes down on Heaven-town
(If there should be night up there)
You will choose the house you like the best
Of all that you can see:
And its walls will glow as you drowsily go
To the bed up the golden stair,
And I hope you'll be gentle enough to keep
A room in your house for me.

IN MEMORY

I

SERENE and beautiful and very wise,
Most erudite in curious Grecian lore,
You lay and read your learned books, and bore
A weight of unshed tears and silent sighs.
The song within your heart could never rise
Until love bade it spread its wings and soar.
Nor could you look on Beauty's face before
A poet's burning mouth had touched your eyes.
Love is made out of ecstasy and wonder;
Love is a poignant and accustomed pain.
It is a burst of Heaven-shaking thunder;
It is a linnet's fluting after rain.
Love's voice is through your song; above and under
And in each note to echo and remain.

II

Because Mankind is glad and brave and young,
Full of gay flames that white and scarlet glow,
All joys and passions that Mankind may know
By you were nobly felt and nobly sung.
Because Mankind's heart every day is wrung
By Fate's wild hands that twist and tear it so,
Therefore you echoed Man's undying woe,
A harp Aeolian on Life's branches hung.

So did the ghosts of toiling children hover
About the piteous portals of your mind;
Your eyes, that looked on glory, could discover
The angry scar to which the world was blind:
And it was grief that made Mankind your lover,
And it was grief that made you love Mankind.

III

Before Christ left the Citadel of Light,
To tread the dreadful way of human birth,
His shadow sometimes fell upon the earth
And those who saw it wept with joy and fright.
"Thou art Apollo, than the sun more bright!"
They cried. "Our music is of little worth,
But thrill our blood with thy creative mirth,
Thou god of song, thou lord of lyric might!"

O singing pilgrim! who could love and follow
Your lover Christ, through even love's despair,
You knew within the cypress-darkened hollow
The feet that on the mountain are so fair.
For it was Christ that was your own Apollo,
And thorns were in the laurel on your hair.

APOLOGY

(For Eleanor Rogers Cox)

FOR blows on the fort of evil
That never shows a breach,
For terrible life-long races
To a goal no foot can reach,
For reckless leaps into darkness
With hands outstretched to a star,
There is jubilation in Heaven
Where the great dead poets are.

There is joy over disappointment
And delight in hopes that were vain.
Each poet is glad there was no cure
To stop his lonely pain.
For nothing keeps a poet
In his high singing mood
Like unappeasable hunger
For unattainable food.

So fools are glad of the folly
That made them weep and sing,
And Keats is thankful for Fanny Brawne
And Drummond for his king.

They know that on flinty sorrow
And failure and desire
The steel of their souls was hammered
To bring forth the lyric fire.

Lord Byron and Shelley and Plunkett,
McDonough and Hunt and Pearse
See now why their hatred of tyrants
Was so insistently fierce.
Is Freedom only a Will-o'-the-wisp
To cheat a poet's eye?
Be it phantom or fact, it's a noble cause
In which to sing and to die!

So not for the Rainbow taken
And the magical White Bird snared
The poets sing grateful carols
In the place to which they have fared;
But for their lifetime's passion,
The quest that was fruitless and long,
They chorus their loud thanksgiving
To the thorn-crowned Master of Song.

THE PROUD POET

(For Shaemas O'Sheel)

ONE winter night a Devil came and sat upon my bed,
His eyes were full of laughter for his heart was full of crime.
"Why don't you take up fancy work, or embroidery?" he said,
"For a needle is as manly a tool as a pen that makes a rhyme!"
"You little ugly Devil," said I, "go back to Hell,
For the idea you express I will not listen to:
I have trouble enough with poetry and poverty as well,
Without having to pay attention to orators like you.

"When you say of the making of ballads and songs that it is woman's work
You forget all the fighting poets that have been in every land.
There was Byron, who left all his lady-loves to fight against the Turk,

And David, the Singing King of the Jews, who
was born with a sword in his hand.
It was yesterday that Rupert Brooke went out to
the Wars and died,
And Sir Philip Sidney's lyric voice was as sweet
as his arm was strong;
And Sir Walter Raleigh met the axe as a lover
meets his bride,
Because he carried in his soul the courage of his
song.

"And there is no consolation so quickening to the
heart
As the warmth and whiteness that come from the
lines of noble poetry.
It is strong joy to read it when the wounds of the
spirit smart,
It puts the flame in a lonely breast where only
ashes be.
It is strong joy to read it, and to make it is a thing
That exalts a man with a sacreder pride than any
pride on earth.
For it makes him kneel to a broken slave and set his
foot on a king,
And it shakes the walls of his little soul with the
echo of God's mirth.

"There was the poet Homer had the sorrow to be blind,
Yet a hundred people with good eyes would listen to him all night;
For they took great enjoyment in the heaven of his mind,
And were glad when the old blind poet let them share his powers of sight.
And there was Heine lying on his mattress all day long,
He had no wealth, he had no friends, he had no joy at all,
Except to pour his sorrow into little cups of song,
And the world finds in them the magic wine that his broken heart let fall.

"And these are only a couple of names from a list of a thousand score
Who have put their glory on the world in poverty and pain.
And the title of poet's a noble thing, worth living and dying for,
Though all the devils on earth and in Hell spit at me their disdain.
It is stern work, it is perilous work, to thrust your hand in the sun

And pull out a spark of immortal flame to warm
the hearts of men:
But Prometheus, torn by the claws and beaks whose
task is never done,
Would be tortured another eternity to go stealing
fire again."

LIONEL JOHNSON

(For the Rev. John J. Burke, C.S.P.)

THERE was a murkier tinge in London's air
As if the honest fog blushed black for shame.
Fools sang of sin, for other fools' acclaim,
And Milton's wreath was tossed to Baudelaire.
The flowers of evil blossomed everywhere,
But in their midst a radiant lily came,
Candescent, pure, a cup of living flame,
Bloomed for a day, and left the earth more fair.

And was it Charles, thy "fair and fatal King,"
Who bade thee welcome to the lovely land?
Or did Lord David cease to harp and sing
To take in his thine emulative hand?
Or did Our Lady's smile shine forth, to bring
Her lyric Knight within her choir to stand?

FATHER GERARD HOPKINS, S.J.

WHY didst thou carve thy speech laboriously,
And match and blend thy words with curious art?
For Song, one saith, is but a human heart
Speaking aloud, undisciplined and free.
Nay, God be praised, Who fixed thy task for thee!
Austere, ecstatic craftsman, set apart
From all who traffic in Apollo's mart,
On thy phrased paten shall the Splendour be!

Now, carelessly we throw a rhyme to God,
Singing His praise when other songs are done.
But thou, who knewest paths Teresa trod,
Losing thyself, what is it thou hast won?
O bleeding feet, with peace and glory shod!
O happy moth, that flew into the Sun!

GATES AND DOORS

(For Richardson Little Wright)

THERE was a gentle hostler
(And blessèd be his name!)
He opened up the stable
The night Our Lady came.
Our Lady and Saint Joseph,
He gave them food and bed,
And Jesus Christ has given him
A glory round his head.

So let the gate swing open
However poor the yard,
Lest weary people visit you
And find their passage barred;
Unlatch the door at midnight
And let your lantern's glow
Shine out to guide the traveller's feet
To you across the snow.

There was a courteous hostler
(He is in Heaven to-night)
He held Our Lady's bridle
And helped her to alight;

He spread clean straw before her
  Whereon she might lie down,
And Jesus Christ has given him
  An everlasting crown.

Unlock the door this evening
  And let your gate swing wide,
Let all who ask for shelter
  Come speedily inside.
What if your yard be narrow?
  What if your house be small?
There is a Guest is coming
  Will glorify it all.

There was a joyous hostler
  Who knelt on Christmas morn
Beside the radiant manger
  Wherein his Lord was born.
His heart was full of laughter,
  His soul was full of bliss
When Jesus, on His Mother's lap,
  Gave him His hand to kiss.

Unbar your heart this evening
  And keep no stranger out,
Take from your soul's great portal
  The barrier of doubt.

GATES AND DOORS

To humble folk and weary
Give hearty welcoming,
Your breast shall be to-morrow
The cradle of a King.

THE ROBE OF CHRIST

(For Cecil Chesterton)

AT the foot of the Cross on Calvary
Three soldiers sat and diced,
And one of them was the Devil
And he won the Robe of Christ.

When the Devil comes in his proper form
To the chamber where I dwell,
I know him and make the Sign of the Cross
Which drives him back to Hell.

And when he comes like a friendly man
And puts his hand in mine,
The fervour in his voice is not
From love or joy or wine.

And when he comes like a woman,
With lovely, smiling eyes,
Black dreams float over his golden head
Like a swarm of carrion flies.

Now many a million tortured souls
In his red halls there be:
Why does he spend his subtle craft
In hunting after me?

THE ROBE OF CHRIST

Kings, queens and crested warriors
  Whose memory rings through time,
These are his prey, and what to him
  Is this poor man of rhyme,

That he, with such laborious skill,
  Should change from rôle to rôle,
Should daily act so many a part
  To get my little soul?

Oh, he can be the forest,
  And he can be the sun,
Or a buttercup, or an hour of rest
  When the weary day is done.

I saw him through a thousand veils,
  And has not this sufficed?
Now, must I look on the Devil robed
  In the radiant Robe of Christ?

He comes, and his face is sad and mild,
  With thorns his head is crowned;
There are great bleeding wounds in his feet,
  And in each hand a wound.

How can I tell, who am a fool,
  If this be Christ or no?
Those bleeding hands outstretched to me!
  Those eyes that love me so!

I see the Robe—I look—I hope—
I fear—but there is one
Who will direct my troubled mind;
Christ's Mother knows her Son.

O Mother of Good Counsel, lend
Intelligence to me!
Encompass me with wisdom,
Thou Tower of Ivory!

"This is the Man of Lies," she says,
"Disguised with fearful art:
He has the wounded hands and feet,
But not the wounded heart."

Beside the Cross on Calvary
She watched them as they diced.
She saw the Devil join the game
And win the Robe of Christ.

THE SINGING GIRL

(For the Rev. Edward F. Garesché, S.J.)

THERE was a little maiden
In blue and silver drest,
She sang to God in Heaven
And God within her breast.

It flooded me with pleasure,
It pierced me like a sword,
When this young maiden sang: "My soul
Doth magnify the Lord."

The stars sing all together
And hear the angels sing,
But they said they had never heard
So beautiful a thing.

Saint Mary and Saint Joseph,
And Saint Elizabeth,
Pray for us poets now
And at the hour of death.

THE ANNUNCIATION

(For Helen Parry Eden)

"HAIL Mary, full of grace," the Angel saith.
Our Lady bows her head, and is ashamed;
She has a Bridegroom Who may not be named,
Her mortal flesh bears Him Who conquers death.
Now in the dust her spirit grovelleth;
Too bright a Sun before her eyes has flamed,
Too fair a herald joy too high proclaimed,
And human lips have trembled in God's breath.

O Mother-Maid, thou art ashamed to cover
With thy white self, whereon no stain can be,
Thy God, Who came from Heaven to be thy Lover,
Thy God, Who came from Heaven to dwell in thee.
About thy head celestial legions hover,
Chanting the praise of thy humility.

ROSES

(For Katherine Brègy)

I WENT to gather roses and twine them in a ring,
For I would make a posy, a posy for the King.
I got an hundred roses, the loveliest there be,
From the white rose vine and the pink rose bush and from the red rose tree.

But when I took my posy and laid it at His feet
I found He had His roses a million times more sweet.
There was a scarlet blossom upon each foot and hand,
And a great pink rose bloomed from His side for the healing of the land.

Now of this fair and awful King there is this marvel told,
That He wears a crown of linkèd thorns instead of one of gold.
Where there are thorns are roses, and I saw a line of red,
A little wreath of roses around His radiant head.

A red rose is His Sacred Heart, a white rose is His face,
And His breath has turned the barren world to a rich and flowery place.
He is the Rose of Sharon, His gardener am I,
And I shall drink His fragrance in Heaven when I die.

THE VISITATION

(For Louise Imogen Guiney)

THERE is a wall of flesh before the eyes
Of John, who yet perceives and hails his King.
It is Our Lady's painful bliss to bring
Before mankind the Glory of the skies.
Her cousin feels her womb's sweet burden rise
And leap with joy, and she comes forth to sing,
With trembling mouth, her words of welcoming.
She knows her hidden God, and prophesies.

Saint John, pray for us, weary souls that tarry
Where life is withered by sin's deadly breath.
Pray for us, whom the dogs of Satan harry,
Saint John, Saint Anne, and Saint Elizabeth.
And, Mother Mary, give us Christ to carry
Within our hearts, that we may conquer death.

MULTIPLICATION

(For S. M. E.)

I TAKE my leave, with sorrow, of Him I love so well;
I look my last upon His small and radiant prison-cell;
O happy lamp! to serve Him with never ceasing light!
O happy flame! to tremble forever in His sight!

I leave the holy quiet for the loudly human train,
And my heart that He has breathed upon is filled with lonely pain.
O King, O Friend, O Lover! What sorer grief can be
In all the reddest depths of Hell than banishment from Thee?

But from my window as I speed across the sleeping land
I see the towns and villages wherein His houses stand.
Above the roofs I see a cross outlined against the night,
And I know that there my Lover dwells in His sacramental might.

MULTIPLICATION

Dominions kneel before Him, and Powers kiss
His feet,
Yet for me He keeps His weary watch in the tur-
moil of the street:
The King of Kings awaits me, wherever I may go,
O who am I that He should deign to love and serve
me so?

THANKSGIVING

(For John Bunker)

THE roar of the world is in my ears.
Thank God for the roar of the world!
Thank God for the mighty tide of fears
Against me always hurled!

Thank God for the bitter and ceaseless strife,
And the sting of His chastening rod!
Thank God for the stress and the pain of life,
And Oh, thank God for God!

THE THORN

(For the Rev. Charles L. O'Donnell, C.S.C.)

THE garden of God is a radiant place,
And every flower has a holy face:
Our Lady like a lily bends above the cloudy sod,
But Saint Michael is the thorn on the rose-bush of God.
David is the song upon God's lips,
And Our Lady is the goblet that He sips:
And Gabriel's the breath of His command,
But Saint Michael is the sword in God's right hand.

The Ivory Tower is fair to see,
And may her walls encompass me!
But when the Devil comes with the thunder of his might,
Saint Michael, show me how to fight!

THE BIG TOP

THE boom and blare of the big brass band is
cheering to my heart
And I like the smell of the trampled grass and
elephants and hay.
I take off my hat to the acrobat with his delicate,
strong art,
And the motley mirth of the chalk-faced clown
drives all my care away.

I wish I could feel as they must feel, these players
brave and fair,
Who nonchalantly juggle death before a staring
throng.
It must be fine to walk a line of silver in the air
And to cleave a hundred feet of space with a
gesture like a song.

Sir Henry Irving never knew a keener, sweeter
thrill
Than that which stirs the breast of him who
turns his painted face
To the circling crowd who laugh aloud and clap
hands with a will
As a tribute to the clown who won the great
wheel-barrow race.

Now, one shall work in the living rock with a mallet and a knife,
And another shall dance on a big white horse that canters round a ring,
By another's hand shall colours stand in similitude of life;
And the hearts of the three shall be moved by one mysterious high thing.

For the sculptor and the acrobat and the painter are the same.
They know one hope, one fear, one pride, one sorrow and one mirth,
And they take delight in the endless fight for the fickle world's acclaim;
For they worship art above the clouds and serve her on the earth.

But you, who can build of the stubborn rock no form of loveliness,
Who can never mingle the radiant hues to make a wonder live,
Who can only show your little woe to the world in a rhythmic dress—
What kind of a counterpart of you does the three-ring circus give?

Well—here in a little side-show tent to-day some
people stand,
One is a giant, one a dwarf, and one has a figured
skin,
And each is scarred and seared and marred by
Fate's relentless hand,
And each one shows his grief for pay, with a sort
of pride therein.

You put your sorrow into rhyme and want the
world to look;
You sing the news of your ruined hope and want
the world to hear;
Their woe is pent in a canvas tent and yours in a
printed book.
O, poet of the broken heart, salute your brothers
here!

MID-OCEAN IN WAR-TIME

(For My Mother)

THE fragile splendour of the level sea,
The moon's serene and silver-veilèd face,
Make of this vessel an enchanted place
Full of white mirth and golden sorcery.
Now, for a time, shall careless laughter be
Blended with song, to lend song sweeter grace,
And the old stars, in their unending race,
Shall heed and envy young humanity.

And yet to-night, a hundred leagues away,
These waters blush a strange and awful red.
Before the moon, a cloud obscenely grey
Rises from decks that crash with flying lead.
And these stars smile their immemorial way
On waves that shroud a thousand newly dead!

QUEEN ELIZABETH SPEAKS

MY hands were stained with blood, my heart was proud and cold,
My soul is black with shame . . . but I gave Shakespeare gold.
So after æons of flame, I may, by grace of God,
Rise up to kiss the dust that Shakespeare's feet have trod.

IN MEMORY OF RUPERT BROOKE

IN alien earth, across a troubled sea,
His body lies that was so fair and young.
His mouth is stopped, with half his songs unsung;
His arm is still, that struck to make men free.
But let no cloud of lamentation be
Where, on a warrior's grave, a lyre is hung.
We keep the echoes of his golden tongue,
We keep the vision of his chivalry.

So Israel's joy, the loveliest of kings,
Smote now his harp, and now the hostile horde.
To-day the starry roof of Heaven rings
With psalms a soldier made to praise his Lord;
And David rests beneath Eternal wings,
Song on his lips, and in his hand a sword.

THE NEW SCHOOL

(For My Mother)

THE halls that were loud with the merry tread
of young and careless feet
Are still with a stillness that is too drear to seem
like holiday,
And never a gust of laughter breaks the calm of the
dreaming street
Or rises to shake the ivied walls and frighten the
doves away.

The dust is on book and on empty desk, and the
tennis-racquet and balls
Lie still in their lonely locker and wait for a game
that is never played,
And over the study and lecture-room and the river
and meadow falls
A stern peace, a strange peace, a peace that War
has made.

For many a youthful shoulder now is gay with an
epaulet,
And the hand that was deft with a cricket-bat is
defter with a sword,

And some of the lads will laugh to-day where the trench is red and wet,
And some will win on the bloody field the accolade of the Lord.

They have taken their youth and mirth away from the study and playing-ground
To a new school in an alien land beneath an alien sky;
Out in the smoke and roar of the fight their lessons and games are found,
And they who were learning how to live are learning how to die.

And after the golden day has come and the war is at an end,
A slab of bronze on the chapel wall will tell of the noble dead.
And every name on that radiant list will be the name of a friend,
A name that shall through the centuries in grateful prayers be said.

And there will be ghosts in the old school, brave ghosts with laughing eyes,
On the field with a ghostly cricket-bat, by the stream with a ghostly rod;

They will touch the hearts of the living with a flame
that sanctifies,
A flame that they took with strong young hands
from the altar-fires of God.

EASTER WEEK

(In memory of Joseph Mary Plunkett)

("Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave.")

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS.

"ROMANTIC Ireland's dead and gone,
It's with O'Leary in the grave."
Then, Yeats, what gave that Easter dawn
A hue so radiantly brave?

There was a rain of blood that day,
Red rain in gay blue April weather.
It blessed the earth till it gave birth
To valour thick as blooms of heather.

Romantic Ireland never dies!
O'Leary lies in fertile ground,
And songs and spears throughout the years
Rise up where patriot graves are found.

Immortal patriots newly dead
And ye that bled in bygone years,
What banners rise before your eyes?
What is the tune that greets your ears?

The young Republic's banners smile
For many a mile where troops convene.
O'Connell Street is loudly sweet
With strains of Wearing of the Green.

The soil of Ireland throbs and glows
With life that knows the hour is here
To strike again like Irishmen
For that which Irishmen hold dear.

Lord Edward leaves his resting place
And Sarsfield's face is glad and fierce.
See Emmet leap from troubled sleep
To grasp the hand of Padraic Pearse!

There is no rope can strangle song
And not for long death takes his toll.
No prison bars can dim the stars
Nor quicklime eat the living soul.

Romantic Ireland is not old.
For years untold her youth will shine.
Her heart is fed on Heavenly bread,
The blood of martyrs is her wine.

THE CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS

(From the French of Émile Verhaeren)

HE who walks through the meadows of Champagne
At noon in Fall, when leaves like gold appear,
Sees it draw near
Like some great mountain set upon the plain,
From radiant dawn until the close of day,
Nearer it grows
To him who goes
Across the country. When tall towers lay
Their shadowy pall
Upon his way,
He enters, where
The solid stone is hollowed deep by all
Its centuries of beauty and of prayer.

Ancient French temple! thou whose hundred kings
Watch over thee, emblazoned on thy walls,
Tell me, within thy memory-hallowed halls
What chant of triumph, or what war-song rings?
Thou hast known Clovis and his Frankish train,
Whose mighty hand Saint Remy's hand did keep
And in thy spacious vault perhaps may sleep
An echo of the voice of Charlemagne.

For God thou hast known fear, when from His side
Men wandered, seeking alien shrines and new,
But still the sky was bountiful and blue
And thou wast crowned with France's love and pride.
Sacred thou art, from pinnacle to base;
And in thy panes of gold and scarlet glass
The setting sun sees thousandfold his face;
Sorrow and joy, in stately silence pass
Across thy walls, the shadow and the light;
Around thy lofty pillars, tapers white
Illuminate, with delicate sharp flames,
The brows of saints with venerable names,
And in the night erect a fiery wall.
A great but silent fervour burns in all
Those simple folk who kneel, pathetic, dumb,
And know that down below, beside the Rhine—
Cannon, horses, soldiers, flags in line—
With blare of trumpets, mighty armies come.

Suddenly, each knows fear;
Swift rumours pass, that every one must hear,
The hostile banners blaze against the sky
And by the embassies mobs rage and cry.
Now war has come, and peace is at an end.
On Paris town the German troops descend.

They are turned back, and driven to Champagne.
And now, as to so many weary men,
The glorious temple gives them welcome, when
It meets them at the bottom of the plain.

At once, they set their cannon in its way.
  There is no gable now, nor wall
That does not suffer, night and day,
  As shot and shell in crushing torrents fall.
The stricken tocsin quivers through the tower;
  The triple nave, the apse, the lonely choir
Are circled, hour by hour,
  With thundering bands of fire
And Death is scattered broadcast among men.

And then
That which was splendid with baptismal grace;
The stately arches soaring into space,
The transepts, columns, windows gray and gold,
The organ, in whose tones the ocean rolled,
The crypts, of mighty shades the dwelling places,
The Virgin's gentle hands, the Saints' pure faces,
All, even the pardoning hands of Christ the Lord
Were struck and broken by the wanton sword
Of sacrilegious lust.
O beauty slain, O glory in the dust!

Strong walls of faith, most basely overthrown!
The crawling flames, like adders glistening
Ate the white fabric of this lovely thing.
Now from its soul arose a piteous moan,
The soul that always loved the just and fair.
Granite and marble loud their woe confessed,
The silver monstrances that Popes had blessed,
The chalices and lamps and crosiers rare
Were seared and twisted by a flaming breath;
The horror everywhere did range and swell,
The guardian Saints into this furnace fell,
Their bitter tears and screams were stilled in death.

Around the flames armed hosts are skirmishing,
The burning sun reflects the lurid scene;
The German army, fighting for its life,
Rallies its torn and terrified left wing;
  And, as they near this place
  The imperial eagles see
  Before them in their flight,
Here, in the solemn night,
The old cathedral, to the years to be
  Showing, with wounded arms, their own disgrace.

KINGS

(For the Rev. James B. Dollard)

THE Kings of the earth are men of might,
And cities are burned for their delight,
And the skies rain death in the silent night,
And the hills belch death all day!

But the King of Heaven, Who made them all,
Is fair and gentle, and very small;
He lies in the straw, by the oxen's stall—
Let them think of Him to-day!

THE WHITE SHIPS AND THE RED

(For Alden March)

WITH drooping sail and pennant
That never a wind may reach,
They float in sunless waters
Beside a sunless beach.
Their mighty masts and funnels
Are white as driven snow,
And with a pallid radiance
Their ghostly bulwarks glow.

Here is a Spanish galleon
That once with gold was gay,
Here is a Roman trireme
Whose hues outshone the day.
But Tyrian dyes have faded,
And prows that once were bright
With rainbow stains wear only
Death's livid, dreadful white.

White as the ice that clove her
That unforgotten day,
Among her pallid sisters
The grim *Titanic* lay.

And through the leagues above her
She looked aghast, and said:
"What is this living ship that comes
Where every ship is dead?"

The ghostly vessels trembled
From ruined stern to prow;
What was this thing of terror
That broke their vigil now?
Down through the startled ocean
A mighty vessel came,
Not white, as all dead ships must be,
But red, like living flame!

The pale green waves about her
Were swiftly, strangely dyed,
By the great scarlet stream that flowed
From out her wounded side.
And all her decks were scarlet
And all her shattered crew.
She sank among the white ghost ships
And stained them through and through.

The grim *Titanic* greeted her.
"And who art thou?" she said;
"Why dost thou join our ghostly fleet
Arrayed in living red?

We are the ships of sorrow
  Who spend the weary night,
Until the dawn of Judgment Day,
  Obscure and still and white."

"Nay," said the scarlet visitor,
  "Though I sink through the sea,
A ruined thing that was a ship,
  I sink not as did ye.
For ye met with your destiny
  By storm or rock or fight,
So through the lagging centuries
  Ye wear your robes of white.

"But never crashing iceberg
  Nor honest shot of foe,
Nor hidden reef has sent me
  The way that I must go.
My wound that stains the waters,
  My blood that is like flame,
Bear witness to a loathly deed,
  A deed without a name.

"I went not forth to battle,
  I carried friendly men,
The children played about my decks,
  The women sang—and then—

And then—the sun blushed scarlet
  And Heaven hid its face,
The world that God created
  Became a shameful place!

"My wrong cries out for vengeance,
  The blow that sent me here
Was aimed in Hell. My dying scream
  Has reached Jehovah's ear.
Not all the seven oceans
  Shall wash away that stain;
Upon a brow that wears a crown
  I am the brand of Cain."

When God's great voice assembles
  The fleet on Judgment Day,
The ghosts of ruined ships will rise
  In sea and strait and bay.
Though they have lain for ages
  Beneath the changeless flood,
They shall be white as silver,
  But one—shall be like blood.

THE TWELVE-FORTY-FIVE

(For Edward J. Wheeler)

WITHIN the Jersey City shed
The engine coughs and shakes its head.
The smoke, a plume of red and white,
Waves madly in the face of night.
And now the grave incurious stars
Gleam on the groaning hurrying cars.
Against the kind and awful reign
Of darkness, this our angry train,
A noisy little rebel, pouts
Its brief defiance, flames and shouts—
And passes on, and leaves no trace.
For darkness holds its ancient place,
Serene and absolute, the king
Unchanged, of every living thing.
The houses lie obscure and still
In Rutherford and Carlton Hill.
Our lamps intensify the dark
Of slumbering Passaic Park.
And quiet holds the weary feet
That daily tramp through Prospect Street.
What though we clang and clank and roar
Through all Passaic's streets? No door

Will open, not an eye will see
Who this loud vagabond may be.
Upon my crimson cushioned seat,
In manufactured light and heat,
I feel unnatural and mean.
Outside the towns are cool and clean;
Curtained awhile from sound and sight
They take God's gracious gift of night.
The stars are watchful over them.
On Clifton as on Bethlehem
The angels, leaning down the sky,
Shed peace and gentle dreams. And I—
I ride, I blasphemously ride
Through all the silent countryside.
The engine's shriek, the headlight's glare,
Pollute the still nocturnal air.
The cottages of Lake View sigh
And sleeping, frown as we pass by.
Why, even strident Paterson
Rests quietly as any nun.
Her foolish warring children keep
The grateful armistice of sleep.
For what tremendous errand's sake
Are we so blatantly awake?
What precious secret is our freight?
What king must be abroad so late?

Perhaps Death roams the hills to-night
And we rush forth to give him fight.
Or else, perhaps, we speed his way
To some remote unthinking prey.
Perhaps a woman writhes in pain
And listens—listens for the train!
The train, that like an angel sings,
The train, with healing on its wings.
Now "Hawthorne!" the conductor cries.
My neighbor starts and rubs his eyes.
He hurries yawning through the car
And steps out where the houses are.
This is the reason of our quest!
Not wantonly we break the rest
Of town and village, nor do we
Lightly profane night's sanctity.
What Love commands the train fulfills,
And beautiful upon the hills
Are these our feet of burnished steel.
Subtly and certainly I feel
That Glen Rock welcomes us to her
And silent Ridgewood seems to stir
And smile, because she knows the train
Has brought her children back again.
We carry people home—and so
God speeds us, wheresoe'er we go.

THE TWELVE-FORTY-FIVE

Hohokus, Waldwick, Allendale
Lift sleepy heads to give us hail.
In Ramsey, Mahwah, Suffern stand
Houses that wistfully demand
A father—son—some human thing
That this, the midnight train, may bring.
The trains that travel in the day
They hurry folks to work or play.
The midnight train is slow and old,
But of it let this thing be told,
To its high honor be it said,
It carries people home to bed.
My cottage lamp shines white and clear.
God bless the train that brought me here.

PENNIES

A FEW long-hoarded pennies in his hand,
Behold him stand;
A kilted Hedonist, perplexed and sad.
The joy that once he had,
The first delight of ownership is fled.
He bows his little head.
Ah, cruel Time, to kill
That splendid thrill!

Then in his tear-dimmed eyes
New lights arise.
He drops his treasured pennies on the ground,
They roll and bound
And scattered, rest.
Now with what zest
He runs to find his errant wealth again!

So unto men
Doth God, depriving that He may bestow.
Fame, health and money go,
But that they may, new found, be newly sweet.
Yea, at His feet
Sit, waiting us, to their concealment bid,
All they, our lovers, whom His Love hath hid.

PENNIES

Lo, comfort blooms on pain, and peace on strife,
And gain on loss.
What is the key to Everlasting Life?
A blood-stained Cross.

TREES

(For Mrs. Henry Mills Alden)

I THINK that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

STARS

(For the Rev. James J. Daly, S.J.)

BRIGHT stars, yellow stars, flashing through the air,
Are you errant strands of Lady Mary's hair?
As she slits the cloudy veil and bends down through,
Do you fall across her cheeks and over heaven too?

Gay stars, little stars, you are little eyes,
Eyes of baby angels playing in the skies.
Now and then a wingéd child turns his merry face
Down toward the spinning world—what a funny place!

Jesus Christ came from the Cross (Christ receive my soul!)
In each perfect hand and foot there was a bloody hole.
Four great iron spikes there were, red and never dry,
Michael plucked them from the Cross and set them in the sky.

Christ's Troop, Mary's Guard, God's own men,
Draw your swords and strike at Hell and strike again.
Every steel-born spark that flies where God's battles are,
Flashes past the face of God, and is a star.

OLD POETS

(For Robert Cortes Holliday)

IF I should live in a forest
And sleep underneath a tree,
No grove of impudent saplings
Would make a home for me.

I'd go where the old oaks gather,
Serene and good and strong,
And they would not sigh and tremble
And vex me with a song.

The pleasantest sort of poet
Is the poet who's old and wise,
With an old white beard and wrinkles
About his kind old eyes.

For these young flippertigibbets
A-rhyming their hours away
They won't be still like honest men
And listen to what you say.

The young poet screams forever
About his sex and his soul;
But the old man listens, and smokes his pipe,
And polishes its bowl.

There should be a club for poets
  Who have come to seventy year.
They should sit in a great hall drinking
  Red wine and golden beer.

They would shuffle in of an evening,
  Each one to his cushioned seat,
And there would be mellow talking
  And silence rich and sweet.

There is no peace to be taken
  With poets who are young,
For they worry about the wars to be fought
  And the songs that must be sung.

But the old man knows that he's in his chair
  And that God's on His throne in the sky.
So he sits by the fire in comfort
  And he lets the world spin by.

DELICATESSEN

WHY is that wanton gossip Fame
So dumb about this man's affairs?
Why do we twitter at his name
Who come to buy his curious wares?

Here is a shop of wonderment.
From every land has come a prize;
Rich spices from the Orient,
And fruit that knew Italian skies,

And figs that ripened by the sea
In Smyrna, nuts from hot Brazil,
Strange pungent meats from Germany,
And currants from a Grecian hill.

He is the lord of goodly things
That make the poor man's table gay,
Yet of his worth no minstrel sings
And on his tomb there is no bay.

Perhaps he lives and dies unpraised,
This trafficker in humble sweets,
Because his little shops are raised
By thousands in the city streets.

Yet stars in greater numbers shine,
And violets in millions grow,
And they in many a golden line
Are sung, as every child must know.

Perhaps Fame thinks his worried eyes,
His wrinkled, shrewd, pathetic face,
His shop, and all he sells and buys
Are desperately commonplace.

Well, it is true he has no sword
To dangle at his booted knees.
He leans across a slab of board,
And draws his knife and slices cheese.

He never heard of chivalry,
He longs for no heroic times;
He thinks of pickles, olives, tea,
And dollars, nickels, cents and dimes.

His world has narrow walls, it seems;
By counters is his soul confined;
His wares are all his hopes and dreams,
They are the fabric of his mind.

Yet—in a room above the store
There is a woman—and a child
Pattered just now across the floor;
The shopman looked at him and smiled.

For, once he thrilled with high romance
And turned to love his eager voice.
Like any cavalier of France
He wooed the maiden of his choice.

And now deep in his weary heart
Are sacred flames that whitely burn.
He has of Heaven's grace a part
Who loves, who is beloved in turn.

And when the long day's work is done,
(How slow the leaden minutes ran!)
Home, with his wife and little son,
He is no huckster, but a man!

And there are those who grasp his hand,
Who drink with him and wish him well.
O in no drear and lonely land
Shall he who honours friendship dwell.

And in his little shop, who knows
What bitter games of war are played?
Why, daily on each corner grows
A foe to rob him of his trade.

He fights, and for his fireside's sake;
He fights for clothing and for bread:
The lances of his foemen make
A steely halo round his head.

He decks his window artfully,
He haggles over paltry sums.
In this strange field his war must be
And by such blows his triumph comes.

What if no trumpet sounds to call
His armèd legions to his side?
What if to no ancestral hall
He comes in all a victor's pride?

The scene shall never fit the deed.
Grotesquely wonders come to pass.
The fool shall mount an Arab steed
And Jesus ride upon an ass.

DELICATESSEN

This man has home and child and wife
  And battle set for every day.
This man has God and love and life;
  These stand, all else shall pass away.

O Carpenter of Nazareth,
  Whose mother was a village maid,
Shall we, Thy children, blow our breath
  In scorn on any humble trade?

Have pity on our foolishness
  And give us eyes, that we may see
Beneath the shopman's clumsy dress
  The splendour of humanity!

SERVANT GIRL AND GROCER'S BOY

HER lips' remark was: "Oh, you kid!"
Her soul spoke thus (I know it did):

"O king of realms of endless joy,
My own, my golden grocer's boy,

I am a princess forced to dwell
Within a lonely kitchen cell,

While you go dashing through the land
With loveliness on every hand.

Your whistle strikes my eager ears
Like music of the choiring spheres.

The mighty earth grows faint and reels
Beneath your thundering wagon wheels.

How keenly, perilously sweet
To cling upon that swaying seat!

How happy she who by your side
May share the splendours of that ride!

Ah, if you will not take my hand
And bear me off across the land,

Then, traveller from Arcady,
Remain awhile and comfort me.

What other maiden can you find
So young and delicate and kind?"

Her lips' remark was: "Oh, you kid!"
Her soul spoke thus (I know it did).

WEALTH

(For Aline)

FROM what old ballad, or from what rich frame
Did you descend to glorify the earth?
Was it from Chaucer's singing book you came?
Or did Watteau's small brushes give you birth?

Nothing so exquisite as that slight hand
Could Raphael or Leonardo trace.
Nor could the poets know in Fairyland
The changing wonder of your lyric face.

I would possess a host of lovely things,
But I am poor and such joys may not be.
So God who lifts the poor and humbles kings
Sent loveliness itself to dwell with me.

MARTIN

WHEN I am tired of earnest men,
Intense and keen and sharp and clever,
Pursuing fame with brush or pen,
Or counting metal disks forever,
Then from the halls of Shadowland,
Beyond the trackless purple sea,
Old Martin's ghost comes back to stand
Beside my desk and talk to me.

Still on his delicate pale face
A quizzical thin smile is showing,
His cheeks are wrinkled like fine lace,
His kind blue eyes are gay and glowing.
He wears a brilliant-hued cravat,
A suit to match his soft grey hair,
A rakish stick, a knowing hat,
A manner blithe and debonair.

How good that he who always knew
That being lovely was a duty,
Should have gold halls to wander through
And should himself inhabit beauty.

How like his old unselfish way
To leave those halls of splendid mirth
And comfort those condemned to stay
Upon the dull and sombre earth.

Some people ask: "What cruel chance
Made Martin's life so sad a story?"
Martin? Why, he exhaled romance,
And wore an overcoat of glory.
A fleck of sunlight in the street,
A horse, a book, a girl who smiled,
Such visions made each moment sweet
For this receptive ancient child.

Because it was old Martin's lot
To be, not make, a decoration,
Shall we then scorn him, having not
His genius of appreciation?
Rich joy and love he got and gave;
His heart was merry as his dress;
Pile laurel wreaths upon his grave
Who did not gain, but was, success!

THE APARTMENT HOUSE

SEVERE against the pleasant arc of sky
The great stone box is cruelly displayed.
The street becomes more dreary from its shade,
And vagrant breezes touch its walls and die.
Here sullen convicts in their chains might lie,
Or slaves toil dumbly at some dreary trade.
How worse than folly is their labour made
Who cleft the rocks that this might rise on high!

Yet, as I look, I see a woman's face
Gleam from a window far above the street.
This is a house of homes, a sacred place,
By human passion made divinely sweet.
How all the building thrills with sudden grace
Beneath the magic of Love's golden feet!

AS WINDS THAT BLOW AGAINST A STAR

(For Aline)

NOW by what whim of wanton chance
Do radiant eyes know sombre days?
And feet that shod in light should dance
Walk weary and laborious ways?

But rays from Heaven, white and whole,
May penetrate the gloom of earth;
And tears but nourish, in your soul,
The glory of celestial mirth.

The darts of toil and sorrow, sent
Against your peaceful beauty, are
As foolish and as impotent
As winds that blow against a star.

ST. LAURENCE

WITHIN the broken Vatican
The murdered Pope is lying dead.
The soldiers of Valerian
Their evil hands are wet and red.

Unarmed, unmoved, St. Laurence waits,
His cassock is his only mail.
The troops of Hell have burst the gates,
But Christ is Lord, He shall prevail.

They have encompassed him with steel,
They spit upon his gentle face,
He smiles and bleeds, nor will reveal
The Church's hidden treasure-place.

Ah, faithful steward, worthy knight,
Well hast thou done. Behold thy fee!
Since thou hast fought the goodly fight
A martyr's death is fixed for thee.

St. Laurence, pray for us to bear
The faith which glorifies thy name.
St. Laurence, pray for us to share
The wounds of Love's consuming flame.

TO A YOUNG POET WHO KILLED HIMSELF

WHEN you had played with life a space
And made it drink and lust and sing,
You flung it back into God's face
And thought you did a noble thing.
"Lo, I have lived and loved," you said,
"And sung to fools too dull to hear me.
Now for a cool and grassy bed
With violets in blossom near me."

Well, rest is good for weary feet,
Although they ran for no great prize;
And violets are very sweet,
Although their roots are in your eyes.
But hark to what the earthworms say
Who share with you your muddy haven:
"The fight was on—you ran away.
You are a coward and a craven.

"The rug is ruined where you bled;
It was a dirty way to die!
To put a bullet through your head
And make a silly woman cry!

TO A YOUNG POET

You could not vex the merry stars
  Nor make them heed you, dead or living.
Not all your puny anger mars
  God's irresistible forgiving.

"Yes, God forgives and men forget,
  And you're forgiven and forgotten.
You might be gaily sinning yet
  And quick and fresh instead of rotten.
And when you think of love and fame
  And all that might have come to pass,
Then don't you feel a little shame?
  And don't you think you were an ass?"

MEMORIAL DAY

"Dulce et decorum est"

THE bugle echoes shrill and sweet,
But not of war it sings to-day.
The road is rhythmic with the feet
Of men-at-arms who come to pray.

The roses blossom white and red
On tombs where weary soldiers lie;
Flags wave above the honoured dead
And martial music cleaves the sky.

Above their wreath-strewn graves we kneel,
They kept the faith and fought the fight.
Through flying lead and crimson steel
They plunged for Freedom and the Right.

May we, their grateful children, learn
Their strength, who lie beneath this sod,
Who went through fire and death to earn
At last the accolade of God.

In shining rank on rank arrayed
They march, the legions of the Lord;
He is their Captain unafraid,
The Prince of Peace . . . Who brought a sword.

THE ROSARY

NOT on the lute, or harp of many strings
Shall all men praise the Master of all song.
Our life is brief, one saith, and art is long;
And skilled must be the laureates of kings.
Silent, O lips that utter foolish things!
Rest, awkward fingers striking all notes wrong!
How from your toil shall issue, white and strong,
Music like that God's chosen poet sings?

There is one harp that any hand can play,
And from its strings what harmonies arise!
There is one song that any mouth can say,—
A song that lingers when all singing dies.
When on their beads our Mother's children pray,
Immortal music charms the grateful skies.

VISION

(For Aline)

HOMER, they tell us, was blind and could not
see the beautiful faces
Looking up into his own and reflecting the joy of
his dream,
Yet did he seem
Gifted with eyes that could follow the gods to their
holiest places.

I have no vision of gods, not of Eros with love-
arrows laden,
Jupiter thundering death or of Juno his white-
breasted queen,
Yet have I seen
All of the joy of the world in the innocent heart of
a maiden.

TO CERTAIN POETS

NOW is the rhymer's honest trade
A thing for scornful laughter made.

The merchant's sneer, the clerk's disdain,
These are the burden of our pain.

Because of you did this befall,
You brought this shame upon us all.

You little poets mincing there
With women's hearts and women's hair!

How sick Dan Chaucer's ghost must be
To hear you lisp of "Poesie"!

A heavy-handed blow, I think,
Would make your veins drip scented ink.

You strut and smirk your little while
So mildly, delicately vile!

Your tiny voices mock God's wrath,
You snails that crawl along His path!

Why, what has God or man to do
With wet, amorphous things like you?

This thing alone you have achieved:
Because of you, it is believed

That all who earn their bread by rhyme
Are like yourselves, exuding slime.

Oh, cease to write, for very shame,
Ere all men spit upon our name!

Take up your needles, drop your pen,
And leave the poet's craft to men!

LOVE'S LANTERN

(For Aline)

BECAUSE the road was steep and long
And through the dark and lonely land,
God set upon my lips a song
And put a lantern in my hand.

Through miles on weary miles of night
That stretch relentless in my way
My lantern burns serene and white,
An unexhausted cup of day.

O golden lights and lights like wine,
How dim your boasted splendours are.
Behold this little lamp of mine;
It is more starlike than a star!

ST. ALEXIS

Patron of Beggars

WE who beg for bread as we daily tread
Country lane and city street,
Let us kneel and pray on the broad highway
To the saint with the vagrant feet.
Our altar light is a buttercup bright,
And our shrine is a bank of sod,
But still we share St. Alexis' care,
The Vagabond of God.

They gave him a home in purple Rome
And a princess for his bride,
But he rowed away on his wedding day
Down the Tiber's rushing tide.
And he came to land on the Asian strand
Where the heathen people dwell;
As a beggar he strayed and he preached and prayed
And he saved their souls from hell.

Bowed with years and pain he came back again
To his father's dwelling place.
There was none to see who this tramp might be,
For they knew not his bearded face.

But his father said, "Give him drink and bread
And a couch underneath the stair."
So Alexis crept to his hole and slept.
But he might not linger there.

For when night came down on the seven-hilled town,
And the emperor hurried in,
Saying, "Lo, I hear that a saint is near
Who will cleanse us of our sin,"
Then they looked in vain where the saint had lain,
For his soul had fled afar,
From his fleshly home he had gone to roam
Where the gold-paved highways are.

We who beg for bread as we daily tread
Country lane and city street,
Let us kneel and pray on the broad highway
To the saint with the vagrant feet.
Our altar light is a buttercup bright,
And our shrine is a bank of sod,
But still we share St. Alexis' care,
The Vagabond of God!

FOLLY

(For A. K. K.)

WHAT distant mountains thrill and glow
Beneath our Lady Folly's tread?
Why has she left us, wise in woe,
Shrewd, practical, uncomforted?
We cannot love or dream or sing,
We are too cynical to pray,
There is no joy in anything
Since Lady Folly went away.

Many a knight and gentle maid,
Whose glory shines from years gone by,
Through ignorance was unafraid
And as a fool knew how to die.
Saint Folly rode beside Jehanne
And broke the ranks of Hell with her,
And Folly's smile shone brightly on
Christ's plaything, Brother Juniper.

Our minds are troubled and defiled
By study in a weary school.
O for the folly of the child!
The ready courage of the fool!

FOLLY

Lord, crush our knowledge utterly
And make us humble, simple men;
And cleansed of wisdom, let us see
Our Lady Folly's face again.

MADNESS

(For Sara Teasdale)

THE lonely farm, the crowded street,
The palace and the slum,
Give welcome to my silent feet
As, bearing gifts, I come.

Last night a beggar crouched alone,
A ragged helpless thing;
I set him on a moonbeam throne—
To-day he is a king.

Last night a king in orb and crown
Held court with splendid cheer;
To-day he tears his purple gown
And moans and shrieks in fear.

Not iron bars, nor flashing spears,
Not land, nor sky, nor sea,
Nor love's artillery of tears
Can keep mine own from me.

Serene, unchanging, ever fair,
I smile with secret mirth
And in a net of mine own hair
I swing the captive earth.

POETS

VAIN is the chiming of forgotten bells
That the wind sways above a ruined shrine.
Vainer his voice in whom no longer dwells
Hunger that craves immortal Bread and Wine.

Light songs we breathe that perish with our breath
Out of our lips that have not kissed the rod.
They shall not live who have not tasted death.
They only sing who are struck dumb by God.

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

NO longer of Him be it said,
"He hath no place to lay His head."

In every land a constant lamp
Flames by His small and mighty camp.

There is no strange and distant place
That is not gladdened by His face.

And every nation kneels to hail
The Splendour shining through Its veil.

Cloistered beside the shouting street,
Silent, He calls me to His feet.

Imprisoned for His love of me,
He makes my spirit greatly free.

And through my lips that uttered sin
The King of Glory enters in.

TO A BLACKBIRD AND HIS MATE WHO DIED IN THE SPRING

(For Kenton)

AN iron hand has stilled the throats
That throbbed with loud and rhythmic glee
And dammed the flood of silver notes
That drenched the world in melody.
The blosmy apple boughs are yearning
For their wild choristers' returning,
But no swift wings flash through the tree.

Ye that were glad and fleet and strong,
Shall Silence take you in her net?
And shall Death quell that radiant song
Whose echo thrills the meadow yet?
Burst the frail web about you clinging
And charm Death's cruel heart with singing
Till with strange tears his eyes are wet.

The scented morning of the year
Is old and stale now ye are gone.
No friendly songs the children hear
Among the bushes on the lawn.
When babies wander out a-Maying
Will ye, their bards, afar be straying?
Unhymned by you, what is the dawn?

Nay, since ye loved ye cannot die.
  Above the stars is set your nest.
Through Heaven's fields ye sing and fly
  And in the trees of Heaven rest.
And little children in their dreaming
Shall see your soft black plumage gleaming
  And smile, by your clear music blest.

THE FOURTH SHEPHERD

(For Thomas Walsh)

I

ON nights like this the huddled sheep
Are like white clouds upon the grass,
And merry herdsmen guard their sleep,
And chat and watch the big stars pass.

It is a pleasant thing to lie
Upon the meadow on the hill
With kindly fellowship near by
Of sheep and men of gentle will.

I lean upon my broken crook
And dream of sheep and grass and men—
O shameful eyes that cannot look
On any honest thing again!

On bloody feet I clambered down
And fled the wages of my sin,
I am the leavings of the town,
And meanly serve its meanest inn.

I tramp the courtyard stones in grief,
While sleep takes man and beast to her.
And every cloud is calling "Thief!"
And every star calls "Murderer!"

The hand of God is sure and strong,
  Nor shall a man forever flee
The bitter punishment of wrong.
  The wrath of God is over me!

With ashen bread and wine of tears
  Shall I be solaced in my pain.
I wear through black and endless years
  Upon my brow the mark of Cain.

Poor vagabond, so old and mild,
  Will they not keep him for a night?
And She, a woman great with child,
  So frail and pitiful and white.

Good people, since the tavern door
  Is shut to you, come here instead.
See, I have cleansed my stable floor
  And piled fresh hay to make a bed.

Here is some milk and oaten cake.
  Lie down and sleep and rest you fair,
Nor fear, O simple folk, to take
  The bounty of a child of care.

On nights like this the huddled sheep—
  I never saw a night so fair.
How huge the sky is, and how deep!
  And how the planets flash and glare!

THE FOURTH SHEPHERD

At dawn beside my drowsy flock
  What wingéd music I have heard!
But now the clouds with singing rock
  As if the sky were turning bird.

O blinding Light, O blinding Light!
  Burn through my heart with sweetest pain.
O flaming Song, most loudly bright,
  Consume away my deadly stain!

The stable glows against the sky,
  And who are these that throng the way?
My three old comrades hasten by
  And shining angels kneel and pray.

The door swings wide—I cannot go—
  I must and yet I dare not see.
Lord, who am I that I should know—
  Lord, God, be merciful to me!

O Whiteness, whiter than the fleece
  Of new-washed sheep on April sod!
O Breath of Life, O Prince of Peace,
  O Lamb of God, O Lamb of God!

EASTER

THE air is like a butterfly
With frail blue wings.
The happy earth looks at the sky
And sings.

MOUNT HOUVENKOPF

SERENE he stands, with mist serenely crowned,
And draws a cloak of trees about his breast.
The thunder roars but cannot break his rest
And from his rugged face the tempests bound.
He does not heed the angry lightning's wound,
The raging blizzard is his harmless guest,
And human life is but a passing jest
To him who sees Time spin the years around.

But fragile souls, in skyey reaches find
High vantage-points and view him from afar.
How low he seems to the ascended mind,
How brief he seems where all things endless are;
This little playmate of the mighty wind,
This young companion of an ancient star.

THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

WHENEVER I walk to Suffern along the Erie track
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

THE HOUSE WITH NOBODY IN IT

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw
and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and
give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring
window and door,
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its
block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be
sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never
known.

But a house that has done what a house should do,
a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man
and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up
his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever
your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping and
looking back,

Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and
the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a
house with a broken heart.

DAVE LILLY

THERE'S a brook on the side of Greylock that used to be full of trout,
But there's nothing there now but minnows; they say it is all fished out.
I fished there many a Summer day some twenty years ago,
And I never quit without getting a mess of a dozen or so.

There was a man, Dave Lilly, who lived on the North Adams road,
And he spent all his time fishing, while his neighbors reaped and sowed.
He was the luckiest fisherman in the Berkshire hills, I think.
And when he didn't go fishing he'd sit in the tavern and drink.

Well, Dave is dead and buried and nobody cares very much;
They have no use in Greylock for drunkards and loafers and such.

But I always liked Dave Lilly, he was pleasant as
you could wish;
He was shiftless and good-for-nothing, but he cer-
tainly could fish.

The other night I was walking up the hill from
Williamstown
And I came to the brook I mentioned, and I
stopped on the bridge and sat down.
I looked at the blackened water with its little flecks
of white
And I heard it ripple and whisper in the still of the
Summer night.

And after I'd been there a minute it seemed to me
I could feel
The presence of someone near me, and I heard the
hum of a reel.
And the water was churned and broken, and some-
thing was brought to land
By a twist and flirt of a shadowy rod in a deft and
shadowy hand.

I scrambled down to the brookside and hunted all
about;
There wasn't a sign of a fisherman; there wasn't
a sign of a trout.

But I heard somebody chuckle behind the hollow oak
And I got a whiff of tobacco like Lilly used to smoke.

It's fifteen years, they tell me, since anyone fished that brook;
And there's nothing in it but minnows that nibble the bait off your hook.
But before the sun has risen and after the moon has set
I know that it's full of ghostly trout for Lilly's ghost to get.

I guess I'll go to the tavern and get a bottle of rye
And leave it down by the hollow oak, where Lilly's ghost went by.
I meant to go up on the hillside and try to find his grave
And put some flowers on it—but this will be better for Dave.

ALARM CLOCKS

WHEN Dawn strides out to wake a dewy farm
Across green fields and yellow hills of hay
The little twittering birds laugh in his way
And poise triumphant on his shining arm.
He bears a sword of flame but not to harm
The wakened life that feels his quickening sway
And barnyard voices shrilling "It is day!"
Take by his grace a new and alien charm.

But in the city, like a wounded thing
That limps to cover from the angry chase,
He steals down streets where sickly arc-lights sing,
And wanly mock his young and shameful face;
And tiny gongs with cruel fervour ring
In many a high and dreary sleeping place.

WAVERLEY

1814-1914

WHEN on a novel's newly printed page
We find a maudlin eulogy of sin,
And read of ways that harlots wander in,
And of sick souls that writhe in helpless rage;
Or when Romance, bespectacled and sage,
Taps on her desk and bids the class begin
To con the problems that have always been
Perplexed mankind's unhappy heritage;

Then in what robes of honour habited
The laureled wizard of the North appears!
Who raised Prince Charlie's cohorts from the dead,
Made Rose's mirth and Flora's noble tears,
And formed that shining legion at whose head
Rides Waverley, triumphant o'er the years!

EARLY POEMS

IN A BOOK-SHOP

ALL day I serve among the volumes telling
Old tales of love and war and high romance;
Good company, God wot, is in them dwelling,
Brave knights who dared to scorn untoward chance.

King Arthur—Sidney—Copperfield—the daring
And friendly souls of Meredith's bright page—
The Pilgrim on his darksome journey faring,
And Shakespeare's heroes, great in love and rage.

Fair ladies, too—here Beatricè smiling
Through hell leads Dante to the happy stars;
And Heloise, the cruel guards beguiling,
With Abelard makes mock of convent bars.

Yet when night comes I leave these folks with pleasure
To open Love's great summer-scented tome
Within whose pages—precious beyond measure—
My own White Flower Lady hath her home.

SLENDER YOUR HANDS

SLENDER your hands and soft and white
As petals of moon-kissed roses;
Yet the grasp of your fingers slight
My passionate heart encloses.

Innocent eyes like delicate spheres
That are born when day is dying;
Yet the wisdom of all the years
Is in their lovelight lying.

SLEEP SONG

The Lady World
Is sleeping on her white and cloudy bed.
Like petals furled
Her eyelids close. Beside her dream-filled head
Her lover stands in silver cloak and shoon,
The faithful Moon.

So Love, my Love,
Sleep on, my Love, my Life, be not afraid.
The Moon above
Shall guard the World, and I my little maid.
Your life, your love, your dreams are mine to keep,
So sleep, so sleep.

WHITE BIRD OF LOVE

LITTLE white bird of the summer sky,
Silver against the golden sun,
Over the green of the hills you fly,
You and the sweet, wild air are one.

Glorious sights are in that far place
Reached by your daisy-petal wing,
Rose-coloured meteors dive through space,
Stars made of molten music sing.

Still, though your quivering eager flight
Reaches the groves by Heaven town,
Where all the angels cry out, "Alight!
Stop, little bird, come down, come down!"

Careless you speed over fields of stars,
Darting through Heaven swift and free;
Nothing your arrowy passage bars
Back to the earth and back to me.

Here in the orchard of dream-fruit fair
Out of my dreams is built your nest.
Blossoming dreams all the branches bear,
Fit for my silver dream-bird's rest.

WHITE BIRD OF LOVE

Here, since they love you, the young stars shine,
  Through the white petals come their beams.
Little white love-laden bird of mine,
  Let them shine on you through my dreams.

TRANSFIGURATION

IF it should be my task, I being God,
From whirling atoms to evolve your mate,
With hands omnipotent I should create
A great-souled hero, with the starlight shod.
The subject worlds should tremble at his nod
And all the angel host upon him wait,
Yet he should leave his pomp and splendid state
And kneel to kiss the ground whereon you trod.

But God, who like a little child is wise,
Made me, a common thing of earthly clay;
Then bade me go and see within your eyes
The flame of love that burns more bright than day,
And as I looked I knew with wild surprise
I was transformed—your heart in my heart lay.

BALLADE OF MY LADY'S BEAUTY

SQUIRE ADAM had two wives, they say,
Two wives had he, for his delight,
He kissed and clypt them all the day
And clypt and kissed them all the night.
Now Eve like ocean foam was white
And Lilith roses dipped in wine,
But though they were a goodly sight
No lady is so fair as mine.

To Venus some folk tribute pay
And Queen of Beauty she is hight,
And Sainte Marie the world doth sway
In cerule napery bedight.
My wonderment these twain invite,
Their comeliness it is divine,
And yet I say in their despite,
No lady is so fair as mine.

Dame Helen caused a grievous fray,
For love of her brave men did fight,
The eyes of her made sages fey
And put their hearts in woful plight.

To her no rhymes will I indite,
For her no garlands will I twine,
Though she be made of flowers and light
No lady is so fair as mine.

L'ENVOI

Prince Eros, Lord of lovely might
Who on Olympus dost recline,
Do I not tell the truth aright?
No lady is so fair as mine.

FOR A BIRTHDAY

APRIL with her violets,
May and June with roses,
Young July with all her flowers, crimson, gold and white,
Each in place her tribute sets,
Each her wreath composes,
Making glad the roadway for the Lady of Delight.

Birds with many colours gay,
Through the branches flitting,
Sing, to greet my Lady Love, a lusty welcome song.
Even bees make holiday,
Hive and honey quitting,
Tremulous and jubilant they join the eager throng.

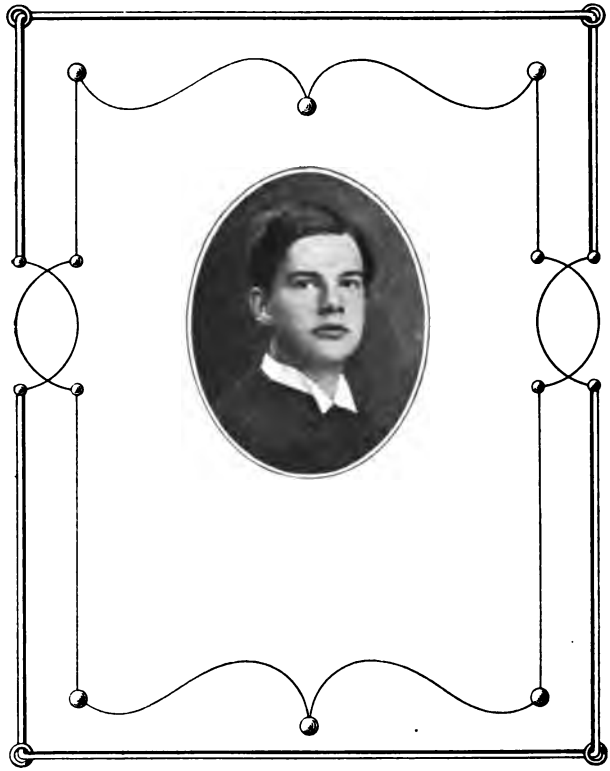
Now the road is flower-paved;
Timid fawns are peering
From their pleasant vantage in the roadside's leafy green.

All the world in sunlight laved,
  Knows the hour is nearing
    That shall bring the golden presence of the well-loved Queen.

Hark! at last the silver trill
  Of a lute is sounding—
    Happy August, purple-clad, appears with all her train.
Sudden sweet the branches fill;
  Every heart is bounding;
    August comes, the kindly nurse of her who is to reign!

And now, with proud and valiant gait,
  An hundred centaurs come.
Pan rides the foremost one in state;
  The waiting crowd grows dumb.
Each centaur wears a jewelled thong
  And harness bright of sheen;
They draw through surging floods of song
  The carriage of the Queen!

"Hail! Hail! Hail! to the Queen in her moonstone car!
Hail! Hail! Hail! to the Lady whose slaves we are!



JOYCE KILMER, AGE 21

TAKEN IN ACADEMIC GOWN, IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIS GRADUATION, AND DIRECTLY PRECEDING HIS MARRIAGE

FOR A BIRTHDAY

We of the meadows, the rocks and the hills,
Dwellers in oceans and rivers and rills,
Beasts of the forests and birds of the air,
Linnet and butterfly, lion and bear,
Daisy and daffodill, spruce-tree and fir,
Yield to our Queen and do homage to her!
Hail! Hail! Hail! we welcome thy royal sway!
Hail! Hail! Hail! O Queen, on this festal day!"

So all the world kneels down to you,
  And all things are your own;
Now let a humble rhymer sue
  Before your crystal throne.
Fair Queen, at your rose-petal feet
  Bid me to live and die!
Not all your world of lovers, Sweet,
  Can love so much as I.

WAYFARERS

UNDERNEATH the orchard trees lies a gypsy sleeping,
Tattered cloak and swarthy face and shaggy moonlit hair;
One brown hand his crazy fiddle in its grasp is keeping,
Through the Land of Dreams he strolls and sings his love songs there.

Up above the apple blossoms where the stars are shining,
Free and careless wandering among the clouds he goes,
Singing of his lady-love and for her pleasure twining
Wreaths of Heaven flowers, violet and golden rose.

In his sleep he stirs, and wakes to find his love beside him,
Pours his load of Dreamland blooms before her silver feet,

Takes her in his arms and as her soft brown tresses
hide him
Both together fare to Dreamland up the star-
paved street.

PRINCESS BALLADE

NEVER a horn sounds in Sherwood to-night,
Friar Tuck's drinking Olympian ale,
Little John's wandered away from our sight,
Robin Hood's bow hangs unused on its nail.
Even the moon has grown weary and pale
Sick for the glint of Maid Marian's hair,
But there is one joy on mountain and dale,
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere!

Saints have attacked them with sacredest might,
They could not shatter their gossamer mail;
Steam-driven engines can never affright
Fairies who dance in their spark-sprinkled trail.
Still for a warning the sad Banshees wail,
Still are the Leprechauns ready to bear
Purses of gold to their captors for bail;
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere!

Oberon, king of the realms of delight,
May your domain over us never fail.
Mab, as a rainbow-hued butterfly bright,
Yours is the glory that age cannot stale.

PRINCESS BALLADE

When we are planted down under the shale,
Fairy-folk, drop a few daffodils there,
Comfort our souls in the Stygian vale;
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere.

L'ENVOI

White Flower Princess, though sophisters rail,
Let us be glad in faith that we share.
None shall the Good People safely assail;
Fairies abound all the time, everywhere!

LULLABY FOR A BABY FAIRY

NIGHT is over; through the clover globes of crystal shine;
Birds are calling; sunlight falling on the wet green vine.
Little wings must folded lie, little lips be still
While the sun is in the sky, over Fairy Hill.
Sleep, sleep, sleep,
Baby with buttercup hair,
Golden rays
Into the violet creep.
Dream, dream deep;
Dream of the night-revels fair.
Daylight stays;
Sleep, little fairy child, sleep.

Rest in daytime; night is playtime, all good fairies know.
Under sighing grasses lying, off to slumber go.
Night will come with stars agleam, lilies in her hand,
Calling you from Hills of Dream back to Fairy-land.

LULLABY FOR A BABY FAIRY

Sleep, sleep, sleep,
Baby with buttercup hair;
Golden rays
Into the violet creep.
Dream, dream deep;
Dream of the night-revels fair.
Daylight stays;
Sleep, little fairy child, sleep.

A DEAD POET

FAIR Death, kind Death, it was a gracious deed
To take that weary vagrant to thy breast.
Love, Song and Wine had he, and but one need—
Rest.

THE MAD FIDDLER

I SLEEP beneath a bracken sheet
In sunlight or in rain,
The road dust burns my naked feet,
The sunrays sear my brain;
But children love my fiddle's sound
And if a lad be straying,
His mother knows he may be found
Where old Mad Larry's playing.

O fiddle, let us follow, follow,
Till we see my Eileen's face,
Through the moonlight like a swallow
Off she flew to some far place.

O, did you ever love a lass?
I loved a lass one day,
And she would lie upon the grass
And sing while I would play.
She was a cruel, lovely thing,
Nor heart nor soul have I,
For Eileen took them that soft spring
When she flew to the sky.

So fiddle, let us follow, follow,
Till we see my Eileen's face,
Through the moonlight like a swallow
Off she flew to some far place.

THE GRASS IN MADISON SQUARE

THE pleasant turf is dried and marred and
seared,
The grass is dead.
No soft green shoot, by rain and sunshine reared,
Lifts up its head.

I think the grass that made the park so gay
In early spring
Now decks the lawns of Heaven where babies play
And dance and sing.

And poor old vagabonds who now have left
The dusty street,
Find fields of which they were in life bereft,
Beneath their feet.

SAID THE ROSE

NO flower hath so fair a face as this pale love of mine;
When he bends down to kiss my heart, my petals try to twine
About his lips to hold them fast. He is so very fair,
My lover with the pale, sad face and forest-fragrant hair.

I think it is a pleasant place, this garden where I grow,
With gravel walks and grassy mounds and crosses in a row.
There is no toil nor worry here, nor clatter of the street,
And here each night my lover comes, pale, sad and very sweet.

He never heeds the violets or lilies tall and white;
I am his love, his only love, his Flower of Delight;
And often when the cold moonbeams are lying all around
My lover kneels the whole night through beside me on the ground.

SAID THE ROSE

How can I miss the sunshine-laden breezes of the south
When all my heart is burning with the kisses of his mouth?
How can I miss the coming of the comfort-bringing rain
When his hot tears are filling me with heaven-sweet love-pain?

There is a jealous little bird that envies me my love,
He sings this bitter, bitter song from his brown nest above:
"Was ever yet a mortal man who wed a flower wife?
He loves the girl down in your roots whose dead breast gives you life."

O little bird, O jealous bird, fly off and cease your chatter!
My lover is my lover, and what can a dead girl matter?
In his hot kisses and sweet tears I shall my petals steep;
I am his love, his only love, I have his heart to keep.

METAMORPHOSIS

HE was an evil thing to see—
Of joy his mouth was desolate;
His body was a stunted tree,
His eyes were pools of lust and hate.

Now silverly the linnet sings
On leaves that from his temples start,
And gay the yellow crocus springs
From the rich clod that was his heart.

FOR A CHILD

HIS mind has neither need nor power to know
The foolish things that men call right and wrong.
For him the streams of pleasant love-wind flow,
For him the mystic, sleep-compelling song.
Through love he rules his love-made universe,
And sees with eyes by ignorance made keen
The fauns and elves whom older eyes disperse,
Great Pan and all the fairies with their queen.
King gods, I pray, bestow on him this dole,
Not wisdom, wealth, nor mighty deeds to do,
But let him keep his happy pagan soul,
The poet-vision, simple, free and true,
To hunt the rainbow-gold and phantom lights,
And meet with dryads on the wooded heights.

THE CLOUDED SUN

(To A. S.)

IT is not good for poets to grow old,
For they serve Death that loves and Love that kills;
And Love and Death, enthroned above the hills,
Call back their faithful servants to the fold
Before Age makes them passionless and cold.

Therefore it is that no more sorry thing
Can shut the sunlight from the thirsty grass
Than some grey head through which no longer pass
Wild dreams more lively than the scent of Spring
To fire the blood and make the glad mouth sing.

Far happier he, who, young and full of pride
And radiant with the glory of the sun,
Leaves earth before his singing time is done.
All wounds of Time the graveyard flowers hide,
His beauty lives, as fresh as when he died.

Then through the words wherein his spirit dwells
The world may see his young impetuous face
Unmarred by Time, with undiminished grace;
While memory no piteous story tells
Of barren days, stale loves and broken spells.

THE CLOUDED SUN

* * * * * * *

Brother and Master, we are wed with woe.
Yea, Grief's funereal cloud it is that hovers
About the head of us, thy mournful lovers.
Uncomforted and sick with pain we go,
Dust on our brows and at our hearts the snow.

The London lights flare on the chattering street,
Young men and maidens love and dance and die;
Wine flows, and the perfumes float up to the sky.
Once thou couldst feel that this was very sweet,
Now thou art still—mouth, hands and weary feet.

O subtle mouth, whereon the Sphinx has placed
The smile of those she kisses at their birth,
Sing once again, for Spring has thrilled the earth.
Nay, thou art dumb. Not even April's taste
Is sweet to thee in thy live coffin cased.

There is no harsher tragedy than this—
That thou, who feltest as no man before
Scent, colour, taste and sound and didst outpour
For us rich draughts of thine enchanted bliss
Shouldst be plunged down this cruel black abyss.

Brother and Master, if our love could free
  Thy flameborne spirit from its leaden chain,
  Thou shouldst rise up from this sad house of pain,
Be young and fair as thou wast wont to be,
And strong with joy as is the boundless sea.

Brother and Master, at thy feet we lay
  These roses, red as lips that thou hast sung,
To mingle with the green and fragrant bay,
  And cypress wreaths above thy head are hung.
We kneel awhile, then turn in tears away.

THE POET'S EPITAPH

DREAMS fade with morning light,
Never a morn for thee,
Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

Over our earthly sight
Shadows of woe must be;
Dreams fade with morning light.

Soldiers awake to fight—
Thou art from strife set free,
Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

Day breaketh, cruel, white,
Lovely the forms that flee;
Dreams fade with morning light.

Thine is the sure delight,
Sleep-visions still to see,
Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

Pity us from thy height,
Dawn-haunted slaves are we;
Dreams fade with morning light,
Dreamer of dreams, good-night.

BEAUTY'S HAIR

A GLEAM of light across the night,
I know that you are there;
The heavens show the lovely glow
Of your transcendent hair,
Your luminous, miraculous, and morning-coloured hair.

I'll take my silver javelin
And point it with a star,
For I have vowed to climb a cloud
And reach to where you are.
My javelin's barb shall pierce your hair
And pin it to the sky,
And I will run to the island sun
Where captive you will lie,
And then I shall dare to touch your hair,
To steal a tress of your magic hair,
And bring to the world a tress of hair
And win the world thereby.

Or shall I put on a green-sea cloak
With sunset laces trimmed,
And shine so gay that the dawn will say
That her radiance is dimmed?
There never was a lover could shine more fair
Than I in my cloak will shine;

And all for the sake of your merry hair,
Your whimsical, perilous, golden hair,
Your lovely, terrible, golden hair,
  More sweet than love or wine.

A twisted bit of silver
  Fell down and bruised my face.
What was it broke my broidered cloak,
  And tore the sunset lace?
I must be clad in sorrow
  Because you are so gay,
And close my eyes if I would see
  A whiter light than day.
So lofty is your golden hair,
I cannot climb to touch your hair,
I must kneel down to find your hair
  Upon the trampled way.

THE WAY OF LOVE

(An Old Legend)

WHEN darkness hovers over earth
And day gives place to night,
Then lovers see the Milky Way
Gleam mystically bright,
And calling it the Way of Love
They hail it with delight.

She was a lady wondrous fair,
A right brave lover he,
And sooth they suffered grievous pain
And sorrowed mightily,
For they were parted during life
By leagues of land and sea.

She died. Then Death came to the man.
He met him joyfully,
And said, "Thou Angel Death, well met!
Quick, do thy will with me,
That I may haste to greet my love
In Heaven's company."

Now on one side of Heaven he dwelt
  And on the other, she;
And broad between them stretched sheer space
  Whereon no way might be,
The empty, yawning, awful depth,
  Unplumbed infinity.

The deathless spheric melody
  Came gently to his ear,
And dulcet notes, the harmonies
  Of Seraphs chanting near.
He heeded not for listening
  His lady's voice to hear.

The Saints and Martyrs round him ranged
  A goodly company,
The Virgin, robed in radiance,
  The Holy Trinity.
He heeded not, but strained his eyes
  His lady's face to see.

At last from far across the void
  Her voice came, faint and sweet.
The bright-hued walls of Paradise
  Did the glad sound repeat;
The distant stars on which she stood
  Shone bright beneath her feet.

"Dear Love," she said, "Oh, come to me!
I cannot see your face.
O will not Lord Christ grant to us
To cross this sea of space?"
Then thrilled his heart with Love's own might.
He answered, by Love's grace.

"The world is wide, and Heaven is wide,
From me to thee is far,
Alas! across Infinity
No passageways there are.
Sweetheart, I'll make my way to thee,
I'll build it, star by star!"

Through all the curving vault of sky
His lusty blows rang out.
He smote the jewel-studded walls
And with a mighty shout
He tore the gleaming masonry
And posts that stood about.

He strove to build a massive bridge
That should the chasm span.
With heart upheld by hope and love
His great task he began,
And toiled and laboured doughtily
To work his God-like plan,

He took the heavy beams of gold
  That round him he did see;
The beryl, jacinth, sardius,
  That shone so brilliantly,
And no fair jewel would he spare
  So zealously worked he.

He stole the gorgeous tinted stuffs
  Whereof are sunsets made,
And his rude, grasping, eager hands
  On little stars he laid;
To rob God's sacred treasure-house
  He was no whit afraid.

And so for centuries he worked.
  Across the void at last
A bridge of precious mold did stand
  Completed, strong and fast.
So now the faithful lovers met
  And all their woe was past.

But soon a shining angel guard
  Sped to the throne of gold
And said, "Lord, see yon new-made bridge,
  A mortal, overbold,
Has built it, scorning thy desire!"
  Straightway the tale he told.

Then said: "Now, Master, Thou mayst see
The thing that has been wrought.
Speak, then, the word, stretch forth Thine hand
That with the speed of thought
This poor presumptuous work may fall
And crumble into naught."

God looked upon the angel then
And on the bridge below.
Then with His smile of majesty
He said: "Let all things know,
This bridge, which has by Love been built,
I will not overthrow."

When darkness hovers over earth
And day gives place to night,
Then lovers see the Milky Way
Gleam mystically bright,
And calling it the Way of Love,
They hail it with delight.

CHEVELY CROSSING

THERE two roads cross by Chevely town
A man is lying dead.
The rumbling wains of scented hay
Roll over his fair head;
A stake is driven through his heart,
For his own blood he shed.

* * * * * * *

Among the pleasant flower-stars
By God's own garden gate,
A little maid fresh come from earth
One summer night did wait;
Her poppy mouth dropped down with fear,
With fear her eyes were great.

The angels saw her sinless face,
The gate was opened wide.
She only shook her dawn-crowned head
And would not come inside.
She was alone, and so afraid—
She hid her face and cried.

Her tears dropped down like sun-filled rain
  Through stars and starless space,
Until at last in Chevely town
  Where in a moonlit place
Her lover knelt upon her grave,
  They fell upon his face.

Said he, "My love, my only love,
  My Elena, my Sweet!
Through what wild ways of mystery
  Have strayed your little feet?
Alone, alone this lonely night
  Where only spirits meet!

"It is not my bleak desert life
  That turns my heart to lead,
Not for my empty arms I mourn,
  Nor for my loveless bed;
But that you wander forth alone
  On heights I may not tread.

"If I could stand beside you now,
  Sin-burdened though I be,
I'd bear you through the trackless ways
  From fear and danger free,
Not God himself could daunt the strong
  Undying love of me!

CHEVELY CROSSING

"Though Heaven is a pleasant place,
What joy for you is there?
Who tread the jewelled streets alone
Without my heart to share
Each throb of your heart, and my arm
Around you, O my Fair!

"I hear your sobbing in the wind,
And in the summer rain
I feel your tears. My heart is pierced
With your sad, lonely pain.
My Love! My only Love! I come!
You shall not call in vain!"

* * * * * * *

Where two roads cross by Chevely town
A man is lying dead.
The rumbling wains of scented hay
Roll over his fair head;
A stake is driven through his heart,
For his own blood he shed.

THE OTHER LOVER

I'M home from off the stormy sea,
And down the street
The folk come out to welcome me
On eager feet.
O neighbours, God be with you all,
But for my true love I must call;
She lingers in her father's hall
So shy, so sweet!

Here is a string of milky pearls
For her to wear,
An amber comb to match the curls
Of her bright hair.
O neighbours, do not crowd me so!
Stand by! stand by! for I must go
To put on my love's hand of snow
This gold ring fair.

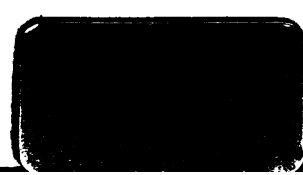
Good dame, why do you block the way
And shake your head?
Must all the things you have to say
Just now be said?
O neighbours, let me pass—but why—
My God, what makes you women cry?
Come tell me that I too may die!
Is my love dead?

"Nay, Marjorie's a living thing,
And fair and strong.
Yet did you wait to give your ring
A year too long.
To seek her love there came the Moon;
Now Marjorie at night and noon
Is chained and sits alone to croon
The Moon's love-song."

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ

This book is due on the last **DATE** stamped below.

4/1 6/92 548

100m-8,'65(F6282s8)2373

STORED AT NRLF